THE Godly Mans ARK,

OR,

City of Refuge in the Day of his DISTRESS.

Discovered in divers SERMONS:

The first of which was preached at the Funeral of Mrs. *Elizabeth Moore.*

The other four were afterwards Preached, and are all of them now made publick, for the supportation and consolation of the Saints of God, in the hour of tribulation.

Hereunto are annexed Mrs. Moores *Evidences for Heaven composed and collected by her in the time of her health, for her comfort in the time of her sickness.*

By ED. CALAMY, B D. *late Pastor of the Church at* Aldermanbury.

The Eighth Edition Corrected and Amended.

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To those of
Aldermanbury Parish:

TOGETHER
With all others who attend constantly upon the Word of God there Preached; and more especially to such of them, who are admitted to partake of the Lords Supper there administred.

Beloved in the Lord;

I *Need not spend much time in giving you an account, how these* ensuing Sermons *come to be made publick. It is not* because they *are more worthy than those which you hear weekly; Nay, I may truly say* (without boasting) *they are* less worthy (*though I think none of them much worth*) *than many others: It is not because I desire to be in Print, but it is*

1. *To present you with the* Pattern

of a Woman *whom God did pick out to make an example of great affliction, and great patience, that when you come into* great troubles, *you may be* comforted *with those* comforts *with which she was* comforted.

2. *To* acquaint *you with the* pains *she took, and with her* diligence *in time of health, to make her* salvation sure; *That so you may be provoked to lay up* suitable, seasonable, *and* sufficient provision *against an evil day, and not have your* Evidences for Heaven *to get in the hour of adversity.*

It is the grand sin of most people, to delay *and* prorogue *their* solemn preparation; *for* affliction *and* sickness, *till they come to be* sick, *and in* affliction. *There are many in Hell, who purposed to repent, but were prevented by death; therefore* Bernard *saith,* Good purposes go to Hell, and only good performances lead into Heaven.

Bona Proposita Gehennam intrant, bona opera Cœlum.

To prevent your delaying *and* deferring *to provide for* Affliction, *these Sermons are Printed; and to perswade you, that whatsoever* you do for Heaven, you would do it speedily, and with all your strength.

The Subjects *handled are so plain*

and

and easie, and the ſtile *ſo* rude, *and* unpoliſhed, *that I was reſolved to have buried them in perpetual oblivion, had I not been* conquered *by this following* (*together with the fore-mentioned*) conſideration, *That they are* calculated only for people under great troubles; *at which times,* learned debates about Diſcipline, and controverted points of Divinity, painted Eloquence and curious language *are of very little eſteem and account.* Afflicted Conſciences *are oftentimes* puzled, *but never* comforted *with doubtful diſputations,* neat and elegant expreſſions *may skin over, but cannot* cure *Spiritual Diſeaſes. Nothing can heal a* wounded Conſcience, *and keep a man from ſinking into deſpondency in the day of great tribulation, but a* real, right, and particular Application of the Promiſes; *to help a* doubting Chriſtian *to perform this great work, there are thirteen plain* Rules *and* Directions *laid down in the following Treatiſe. My Prayer is, that they may prove uſeful and ſucceſsful.*

Seneca *indeed comforts his friend* Polibyus, *and perſwades him to bear his afflictions patiently, becauſe he was*

Fas tibi non est de fortuna conqueri salvo Cæsare.

the Emperors Favorite, *and tells him,* That it was not lawful for him to complain, while *Cæsar* was his Friend; *But this was but a* poor Cordial: *For* Cæsar *himself a little while after, was so miserable, that he had not a friend to help him, much less was he able to help his friend.* The Word of God *affords a* better Cordial; *it bids a true child of God not to be over-much dejected under the greatest affliction, because he is God's Favorite; It tells him,* That it is not lawful for him to complain while God is his Friend, and the Promises of God his rich portion and inheritance. *Though* Job *lost all he had, yet he* lost nothing, *because he lost not his God, who is* All *in* All, *and they who have him, have All.*

Fas tibi non est de fortuna conqueri salvo Deo, & salvis promissis omnibus Dei.

My purpose at first was only to have Printed the Sermon Preached at Mrs. Moores *Funeral, together with her Evidences for Heaven, collected by her in the time of her health. But the importunity of Friends hath over-swayed me, and caused me to add four more, preached immediately afterwards on the same Text.*

And now (Dearly Beloved) having

ving this fair opportunity to ſpeak to you in writing, give me leave to propound and lay before you ſome Cautions *and* Admonitions, *ſome* Rules *and* Directions *for the right ordering of your lives and converſations in theſe dangerous and divided times, that ſo you may be able, after my deceaſe, to have them in perpetual remembrance.*

1. *Take heed of* miſtaking *in the* great work *of* Believing *and* Repenting. Faith *and* Repentance *are the two great* Goſpel-Graces: *And the reaſon why ſo many miſcarry to all eternity, is not for* want *of them (ſuch as they are) but upon a* pure miſtake, *in thinking they have them, when they have but a ſhadow of them. Where one goeth to Hell by* deſperation, *hundreds go thither by* Preſumption. O! quam multi cum hac vana fide, & vana ſpe ad æternos labores deſcendunt; How many thouſands go to Hell with a vain Faith, and hope of Heaven! *And therefore be much in examination, whether your Faith be right or no.* Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the Faith, prove your own ſelves. *To be miſtaken in* 2 Co. 13. 5.
the great work of Believing, is to be

Mark 16. 16 neceſſitated to Damnation; *For* he that believes not; ſhall be Damned. *Ask your ſelves often, whether your* Repentance *be of a right ſtamp, or no? whether it be a* Repentance unto life, a repentance never to be repented of. *To be miſtaken in* purchaſing of Lands, *can but* hurt your outward Eſtates; *but to be miſtaken in the* Graces of Faith and Repentance, will undo your ſouls to all Eternity. *What the Characters of a true Faith and true Repentance are, you have frequently heard, I will not now repeat them. Only remember that* ſelf flattery, *is* ſelf-mockery; *that* ſoul-deluſion, *is* ſoul-damnation. *Pray unto God to deliver you from that* great murderer of ſouls, *the ſin of* Preſumption.

2. *Take heed (as I have ſaid) of* delaying and putting off the great work of providing for Heaven, till ſickneſs or old-age. *The Lord Chriſt commands you,* to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, *&c. Firſt,* before other things, *firſt,* more than other things. *You muſt ſeek after Heaven in the* firſt and chief place, *and if you ſeek in the*

leaſt *and* laſt place, *you will never obtain it. In matters of* weight, delay is dangerous Abigail *made haſte to* prevent David's *fury.* Rahab *made haſte to hang out her ſcarlet-thread.* The ſalvation of your ſouls is a matter of the greateſt concernment; and to delay providing for it, is not only a ſin againſt the Command of Chriſt, but a ſleighting of the Heaven of Chriſt. *How juſtly may God deny to you (who refuſe when he calls) either* ſpace, *or* grace, *to turn to him? and ſay to you, as it is reported, he ſaid to a man, who deſired to repent in his old age,* Ubi conſumpſiſti farinam, ibi conſume furfurem; *Where you have ſpent your flower there go ſpend your bran. Therefore let my counſel be acceptable to you; Make* Chriſt *your* unum neceſſarium, *your one thing neceſſary, and* Heaven *your* primum querite; Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and its Righteouſneſs. *Say with* David, I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments. Pſal. 119 60.

3. *Take heed of* reſting in the Miniſtry of man. *You muſt not* deſpiſe *the teachings of Orthodox Miniſters*

law-

lawfully called, (for he that despiseth them, despiseth Christ) *he that is a-*
Eph. 3. 17 *bove their* teachings, *is above the*
2 Co. 5. 20 teachings of Christ, *for Christ teach-eth by them; they are his* Ambassa-dors, *and they preach not only* in his Name, *but* in his stead) *yet you must not rest satisfied with the* teachings of men, *but pray, that while the* Minis-ter *speaks to your* Ears, *God* would speak to your Hearts, *That God would fulfill that blessed Promise,* Isa. 54. 13. And all thy Children shall be taught of God. *That he would give you an* Unction from the Holy
1 Jo. 2. 20. One, to teach you all things *That*
Ps. 68. 24. *you may see the* goings of God in his Sanctuary, you may behold the beauty of the Lord, *and see his* Power
Ps. 27. 4 and Glory *in his Holy Temple. In a*
Ps. 63. 2 *word, That God would give you, not only the* presence of Ordinances, *but* his Presence in them. *That you may experimentally know, what it is to enjoy communion with God in Gospel-Administration.*

4. *Take heed of* formality, custo-mariness, *and* carelessness *in the* performance of holy Duties. *He that serves God* carelessly, *brings a* curse

upon

upon himself, in stead of a blessing. For cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently. *He that* serves God formally and customarily, doth not serve him, but mock him. *If the* Israelites *had brought the skin of a beast for sacrifice in stead of a beast, it would have been counted a* mocking of God, *rather then a* worshipping of him. *So do they who serve God* negligently and formally.

5. *Be not contented to have a* name to be godly and religious, but labour to be really such as you are supposed by others to be. *Remember what Christ saith of the Church of* Sardis. That she had a name to live, but was dead. Rev. 3. 1. *What will it profit you to be thought by men to be godly, if God knows that you are ungodly? What will it advantage you to seem to go to Heaven, and yet at last to miss of it? O labour to be* Christians, *not only in* word, *but in deed, and in* truth; *not only by* outward profession, *but by a* holy Conversation. *Rest not* satisfied with a less degree of grace than that which will bring you to Heaven. *It will be a double Hell,* to go within an inch of Heaven, & yet at last to miscarry.

6. *Remember*

6. *Remember what Christ saith of* Capernaum. *The* Capernaites *were not so bad as the* Gadarens, *who desired Christ to depart from them: much less as the* Nazarites, *who* thrust
Luke 4. 29 Christ out of their Coasts. *For they*
Luke 4. 32 *heard him preach every Sabbath day, and were astonished at his Doctrin. And yet because they did not sincerely practice what was taught them, Christ pronounceth a heavy doom against them,* Mat. 11. 23, 24. And thou *Capernaum* which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in *Sodom*, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tollerable for the Land of *Sodom* in the day of Judgment than for thee. *It is not enough to praise the Sermons you hear, to admire, and stand astonished at the Doctrine delivered, if you* do not practice *what is* preached. *If you do not love* Sermons as well as hear them, *it shall be easier for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *at the day of Judgment, than for you.*

7. *Take heed that the* love of the world,

world, *doth not eat out the* heart of Religion, *and at last,* Religion it ſelf out o your hearts. *Remember what the Apoſtle* Paul *ſaith,* That the love of mony is the root of all evil, which while ſome have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows. *And what the Apoſtle* John *ſaith,* Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. *There is no ſin ſo contrary to true Saintſhip, as worldly-mindedneſs.* A Saint is one who hath much of Heaven in him, and is much in Heaven. *A Saint is one whoſe* original is from Heaven, *he is* born from above, *his* name is written in Heaven, *his* meditations, affections *and* Converſation *is in Heaven. He is one who is* elected to things above, *and called to* partake of Heaven and eternal happineſs: *And for ſuch a man to mind earthly things, is a ſin of the firſt magnitude. Therefore the Apoſtle would not have* covetouſneſs ſo much as named amongſt *Chriſtians. There is no ſin more* defiles the ſoul. *It will be* ſweet you, *and*

1. Tim. 6. 10.

1 Joh. 2. 15.

Joh. 3. 3. ἄνωθεν

Eph. 5. 3.

make

make you spiritual Black-a-moors and Chimney-sweepers in *Gods sight. There is no sin doth more dead and* dull the heart in the doing of good duties. *It hinders a man both from, and in Ordinances.* The Farmer *and* Mat. 22. 5. Merchant *made* light of the call of Christ, and one went to his Farm, the other to his Merchandize; *There is no sin will more* eclipse the light of Gods countenance from shining upon you. *The* Moon *is never in the* Eclipse, *but when the Earth comes between us and the Sun. A child of God is seldom without the light of Gods countenance, unless it be through the over-much love of the world. No sin will more* hinder your flight up to Heaven. *The* Ostrich *cannot fly high because of the shortness of her wings.* Gen 33. 14. Jacob *was forced in his travelling towards* Canaan *to go slowly and softly, because of his multitude of children, of flocks and herds. And therefore let me again beseech you to take heed of* worldly-mindedness. *This will quickly* betray you into Apostacy from Christ, and from the Truths of Christ. *A man who loves the world, will* (Judas like) betray Christ for

for thirty pieces, *He will part with his* Religion, *rather than with his* eſtate. *This ſin is* the root of all evil, it expoſeth a man to all temptations, *to* hurtful luſts, *to* all errors, *and* all kind of ſorrows: *It will* drown your ſouls in perdition. *He that ſeeks things* below, *ſhall have his* Heaven below. *The Apoſtle ſaith expreſly*, that they who mind earthly things, their end is damnation. *Therefore let me once again repeat it; take heed leſt you be like the* Thorny-ground. *Let not the cares, riches and pleaſures of the World choak the good ſeed that is weekly ſown in your hearts.* 1 Tim. 6. 9. εὐθάνατοι Phil. 3. 19.

8. *Let it be your* morning and evening thought *what ſhall become of you to all eternity; and labour ſo to uſe* things temporal, *as not to loſe the* things that are eternal. *Remember, that this life is a* moment upon which eternity depends; *and according as you ſpend this moment, ſo you ſhall be for ever happy, or for ever miſerable. Remember that the* pleaſures of ſin are but for a moment, but the puniſhments of ſin are everlaſting. Momentum unde tum pendet æternitas. Momentaneum quod delectat æternum quod cruciat.

9. Look upon *Sin* as the greateſt of evils, *greater than* poverty, impriſonment

Anselme. ſonment, baniſhment, or death it ſelf; *chuſe* the greateſt Affliction *rather than* commit the leaſt ſin. *If* Hell *were on the one ſide, and* Sin *on the other, chuſe rather* to go into Hell, *than* to ſin againſt God. *For* Sin is a greater evil *than* Hell, *becauſe it is the cauſe of* Hell, *and* more oppoſite to God (*who is the* chiefeſt good) *than* Hell. *For* God in the Author of Hell (*which he hath provided for all unbelievers, and impenitent perſons*) *But it is* blaſphemy it the higheſt degree, to ſay, That he is the Author of ſin. Look *upon* Chriſt *as the* greateſt good, *greater than* health, wealth, liberty, *or* life. Love Chriſt *more than you* love your eſtates, *or* lives; *He that* loves Chriſt *more than the* world, *will not forſake* Chriſt *to embrace the* world. *He that fears* ſin *more than* affliction, *will not* ſin *to avoid* affliction.

10. *Reſt not contented with that* meaſure of *grace you have attained unto; but labour* to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: *Remember, that the Scripture doth not only perſwade you to* get into Chriſt, *but* to grow up into

Chriſt;

Christ; *not only to be* Righteous, but *to be* filled with the fruits of Righteousness, &c. *Remember that saying of Christ,* To whom much is given, of them much is required. *God hath given you much, you have plentiful means of Salvation, and you have had them many years, he expects from you, not only* good fruit, *but* much good fruit; *not only* thirty-fold, *and* sixty-fold, *but an* hundred-fold. *Where* the Husbandman bestows most cost, *he expects most* fruit. *The* more a Merchant *adventures by Sea,* the greater return he looks for. *God hath done more for you, than for many others; and therefore he expects that you* should do some singular thing for him. He looks *you* should be more humble, more heavenly, more knowing than others. *If the* Sun should *give no more light then a* little Candle, *to what purpose hath God given it so much light? If you that have* Sun like abilities *do no more good than those who have but* half your abilities, *to what purpose have you them? It is a true saying:* As our gifts increase, so must our account increase. *You shall answer at the great day, not only for your*

Eph. 4. 15

Luke 12. 48.

Crescentibus donis crescunt rationes donorum.

gifts, *but for the measure of them. Remember that* God *doth not only require* service *from you, but* service proportionable *to the means and mercies you enjoy.*

He that hath but one Talent, *shall answer but for one; but you that have* five *or* ten Talents, *must be answerable according to the quantity, aswell as the quality of them.*

11. *Labour to* diffuse those graces, which God hath given you, and to communicate them to those with whom you converse. *True Grace is of a* spreading nature, *and therefore compared to* leaven, *which diffuseth it self into the whole* lump; *and to* Salt, *that seasoneth all those things with which it is mingled. As soon as the wo-*
Joh. 4. 25. 30. *man of* Samaria *had found out the* Messias, *she leaves her Water-pot, and goeth into the City, to tell* others what God had done for her. *Assoon*
Act. 10. 24. *as* Cornelius *had received the* Message *from the* Angel, *to send for* Peter; *he calls together* his kinsmen and near friends, *that they, together with him,* might be made partakers of Gospel-Grace. *A true Christian is like a* Needle touched with the Load-

stone,

ſtone. *A* Needle (*truly touched*) *draweth another, and that will draw another, and that another*: *Whoſoever hath his* heart truly touched by effectual Grace, will labour to convert others, and they others. Philip *will draw* Nathaniel, Andrew *will draw* Peter, and Peter being converted, will labour to ſtrengthen his Brethren; There is a *naturall inſtinct in all* creatures to make others like themſelves (*as* Fire *will* turn all things *that come near it*, into Fire) *and there is a* ſpiritual inſtinct *in all* converted Chriſtians *to* convert others. *It is as* natural *to a true Chriſtian* to make others *true Chriſtians, as it is for* a man to beget a man. *True grace is not only of a* communicative, *but of an aſſimilating nature.*

See then that you labour by ſeaſonable *and* religious admonitions, *and* exhortations, *by* communicating of experiences, and eſpecially *by the* ſhining pattern of a holy life and converſation, *to bring all theſe with whom you converſe unto Jeſus Chriſt.* That man hath not grace in truth, who puts it in a dark Lanthorn.

2. *Labour to be good in your Re-*

lations; *good* Husbands, *and good* Wives, *good* Parents, *and good* Children, *good* Maſters, *and good* Servants. *Remember that that man cannot be a good* man, *who is not* good in his Relation. *He cannot be a* good Chriſtian, *who is not a* good Husband, *or a* good Child, *or a* good Father, *&c. She cannot be a* good Chriſtian, *who is not a* good Wife: *and ſo of the reſt.* And *the reaſon is, becauſe the* ſame God who commands the Husband to love God, commands him to love his Wife; the ſame God who commands the woman to obey God, commands her to obey her Husband. *There is the ſame ſtamp of authority upon our* duties *towards our Relations, as upon our* duties *towards God; therefore be ſure to make conſcience of relative duties.*

13. *Joyn* works of mercy and charity together with your profeſſion of piety and holineſs. *For God hates a* penurious, niggardly, *and* covetous profeſſor of Religion. *Let that ſaying of* David *abide upon your hearts,* God forbid I ſhould ſerve the Lord, 1 Sam. 24. 42. with that which coſt me nothing. *God hates your obedience to the firſt Ta-*

ble, *if it be not joyned with obedience to the second. Works of mercy and charity are made in Scripture the touch-stones of the truth of our piety and holiness.* This is pure Religion (*saith the* Apostle) and undefiled before God, and the Father, To visit the Fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. If any man say (*saith* St. *John*) I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a lyar, for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? An unmerciful, and an uncharitable man, is a wicked and an ungodly man. Let it be the care of all those amongst you, who are *rich in estate*, to be rich in good works. *Let every man lay up* for the poor according as *God* hath prospered him, *remembring that saying of Christ*, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world; For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and ye visited

Isa. 1. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

Jam. 1. 27.

1 Joh. 4. 20.

1 Cor. 16. 2

viſited me, I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.

14. *Take heed of* ſeparating from *the* publick Aſſemblies of the Saints. *I have found by experience, that all our* Church-calamities *have* ſprung from *this* root. *He that ſeparates from the publick worſhip, is like* a man tumbling down a hill, and never leaving till he comes to the bottom of it. *I could relate many ſad ſtories of Perſons profeſſing godlineſs, who out of diſlike to our Church-meetings, began at firſt to ſeparate from them, and after many changes and alterations, are turned, ſome of them* Anabaptiſts, *ſome* Quakers, *ſome* Ranters, *ſome* direct Atheiſts. *But I forbear; you muſt hold* communion *with all thoſe* Churches *with which* Chriſt holds Communion; *you muſt ſeparate from the* ſins of Chriſtians, *but not from the* Ordinances of Chriſt. *Take heed of* unchurching the Churches of Chriſt; *leſt you prove* Schiſmaticks *inſtead of being true* Chriſtians.

15. *Though you never live to ſee the* times ſetled, yet labour to get your conſciences ſetled; *Pray for the* Spirit of Truth *to guide you into all* Truth:

Dedicatory.

Truth *in these erring days. Remember that saying of Christ.* If thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darknes; if therefore the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness. *God hath given you your* understandings *to be the guide of the whole man. As the* Eye *is the* guide *of the body, and the* Sun *of the World, so is the* understanding *of the man; therefore you must in praying pray that* God *would give you a right* understanding in all things: *Pray not only for the grace of* Sanctification, *but of* Illumination. *Avoid as soul poyson, all Doctrines.*

1 *Which* tend to Liberty, *open a door to prophaneſs, and are contrary to* Godlineſs.

2 *Which hold forth a* superſtitious ſtrictneſs *above what is required in the Word.*

3 *Which are* Antimagiſtratical *and* Antiminiſterial.

4 *Which* [illegible] *corrupt Nature, and exalt unſanctified Reaſon.*

5 *Which* [illegible] *Grace, to the* [illegible] *of* Good Works.

6 *Which leſſen the* Priviledges of Infants, *and makes their condition worſe under the* New Teſtament *than under*

7 *Which are contrary to the* Analogy of Faith, the ten Commandements, and the Lords Prayer.

16 *Take heed lest being* led away with the error of the wicked, you fall from your own stedfastness. *Take heed of a three-fold Apostacy:*

Of Apostacy.

1 In your Judgments, *from the Truths of Christ, and from the Faith once delivered to the Saints.*

2 In your affections, *from that ancient love, desire and delight, which the Saints of God have had heretofore, and you your selves once had, in, and towards the Ordinances of Christ, and the godly and learned Ministers of Christ.*

3 In your Conversations, *from that humble and exact walking with God in all good duties, both towards God and man. Let me speak to you in the words of the Apostles* Paul *and* Peter: Wherefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast and unmoveable, &c. The God of Grace who hath called you into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ make you perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you.

17 *Remember that it is the will of*

same word of life, *and of the* same Sacramental Bread and Wine, should admonish one another, exhort one another, watch over one another, bear the burthens of one another, provoke one another to love and good works, seek the good of one another, and not your own good only; that you should warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak, *That this is your duty appears from* Coloss. 3. 16. Phil. 2. 4. Heb. 1. 24. Gal. 6. 1. Rom. 15. 2. Rom. 14. 7. 2 Cor. 5. 15. 1 Thes. 5. 11, 13, 14. The 12. verse speaks of Ministerial and Authoritative Admonition, but the 13 and 14 verses, of fraternal and charitative. *These Texts will rise up in Judgement against thousands of Christians at the last day.* I do not say that you are to admonish none but those of your own Society: Admonition is an act of Mercy; *It is* Spiritualis Eleemosyna, spiritual Alms; *and you are bound by the* royal Law of Charity, *by the* Communion of Saints, *the* Communion of Churches, and Communion of Natures, *to distribute these spiritual alms to all that* [illegible] *as God shall give opportu-*

But this I say, *you ought especially to admonish them, and watch over them. This is* novum, *though not* solum vinculum. *Some Divines think that one chief reason why the Israelites were punished for* Achans *sin, was, because they did not* admonish him, *and* watch over him: *For the* Israelites *were commanded in the Plural Number*, Josh. 6. 18. Keep your selves from the accursed thing, &c. *He was* one of the body, and *because they did not* watch over him, *they* communicated in his sin, and in his punishment. *There is an excellent Law in this Nation*, That every Parish shall provide for its own poor. *And by* parity of reason, it is as just and equal, That every Congregation should chiefly and especially look *to the* souls of *their own* members, to warn them, admonish them, exhort them, *and* watch over them.

That you may the better discharge this duty, you must labour to be acquainted one with another, *as far as your* Callings *and* Relations *will give you leave. It is a* great and common sin, *and much to be lamented*, That there is so little knowledge and acquaintance,

gregation: *They* ſit in the ſame Pew together, partake of the ſame Sacrament, and yet converſe no more together, *then if one lived at* York, *and the other at* London: *And when they* do converſe together, *it is* a meer civil and outward converſe, as amongſt ſober Heathens: *But there is very little* Religious Society *between them, for the* ſpiritual edification one of another. *Now this muſt needs be a great ſin; for how can ye watch one another, edifie and admoniſh one another? How can ye ſupport the weak, comfort the feeble-minded, if not ſpiritually acquainted one with another.*

And yet it is not my opinion, that every member of a Congregation *is bound to know every* Fellow-member. *I believe it was not ſo in the* Church *of* Jeruſalem, *or of* Samaria. *It is* incredible, *to think that they all knew one another. I ſhould be loth to lay ſuch a* clog *upon your* conſciences, *as to ſay,* That every Maid ſervant, and Man ſervant is bound to know, and to be acquainted with all thoſe with whom they communicate in the Lords Supper. *Indeed the* Church-Officers *are the eyes of the people, and are to know*

all, and to be acquainted with all. But yet notwithstanding this: I say, it is the duty of every Member, to endeavour according to his place and calling, to grow up in spiritual acquaintance one with another, as God shall offer occasion, and not to be so strange and unacquainted, but to walk in love one towards a other, to bear one anothers burden, and to fulfil the Law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2.

And this you ought the rather to do, that so you may contribute to the *keeping of the* Sacrament of the Lords Supper pure in the Congregation to which you belong. *There is much complaint amongst many (and not without just cause)* of mixt Communions, *and of an* universal liberty, *which some take in giveing the Sacrament promiscuously to all that come; though grossly ignorant, and notoriously scandalous, and in making (if I may so speak) the* Chancel-door, *as wide as the* Church door. *This in my judgement is a great iniquity.*

1 *It is to* give holy things to Dogs, and to cast Pearls to Swine. *It is a* prophanation *of the* Ordinance, *in giveing it to those who are* visibly unworthy *to receive it, and to whom we know*

Christ

Christ would not have us to give it.

2 It is an act of great uncharitableness, to those who are grosly ignorant, and scandalous; for it is to give them that which we know will further their damnation.

3 It makes the Church-Officers (who have power to hinder them, and do not use it) partake of other mens sins.

4 It is an Act of cruelty to the Nation: For because we have been Prodigal of Christs blood, therefore he hath been Prodigal of ours.

5 It is a great scandal to the truly godly, and a stumbling-block to weak Christians, causing them (though unadvisedly) to separate from our Congregations.

6 It is to walk contrary to the practise of most (if not all) of the Churches of Christ in the Christian world.

To prevent this Sacrament prophanation, there are some Ministers, who wholly surcease from administring it; This I allow not, unless in case of absolute necessity; For this is (as it were) to suspend the whole Congregation, and to deny Children their bread, for fear of giving it to Dogs. The best way is to follow the advice which our Lord

Jeſus Chriſt *gives*, Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17. *where he propounds* Rules *and* Directions *for the removing of Scandals out of the Church.* If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee (*ſaith Chriſt*) go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: *He doth not ſay*, Go and ſeparate preſently (*for this is to* rend the Church, *not to* heal it; *this is* to hinder thy Brother from Chriſt, *rather then to* gain him to Chriſt:) *He doth not ſay*, Go and tell others (*for this is to* back-bite thy Brother; *this is to* reproach *him, rather than to* reprove *him*) But *he ſaith*, Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, &c. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, (*that is, to ſuch who are impowered by Chriſt to redreſs offences*) but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him, &c. *Hence learn,*

That all Church-reformation, *and* Sacrament-purity *muſt begin from* Church-members, *and proceed from them in Chriſts* way *unto* Church-Officers; Then if any man who is called

a Brother, be a Fornicator, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or guilty of any other ſcandalous ſin, *It is your duty, who are members of the ſame body with him, and know his guiltineſs, to labour by* private admonition to gain him to God; *not to* ſhame him *by telling others, but to* gain him *by telling him alone. But if he will not hear you, then you are in* an orderly way *to bring it to the* Church, *which if you* neglect to do, *the ſin of* Church-pollution *is your* ſin, *and not the* ſin *of your* Church-Officers. *If there be* three doors *to get into an houſe, he that keeps me out of the firſt, keeps me out of the* other two. *All* Sacrament-reformation *begins with you, you* are the firſt door at which it enters; *if you fail of your duty, the ſin lieth at your door, not at ours. It is the cuſtom of all people* (though otherwiſe Godly) *if a* ſcandalous ſinner *be admitted to the* Lords Supper, *to charge the ſin of it upon the Miniſter, and in the mean time to forget that the ſin is* theirs, *not* his, *becauſe they have not done what* Chriſt *would have them, for the* gaining of him, *and for the* enabling *of the* Church, *to proceed againſt him*

by censures, if he *prove obstinate*. The Lord, *give you hearts to think of this, and* give you grace (*instead of murmuring against, and complaining of mixt communions, and of separating from us because of them*) *to* contribute *your utmost towards the* purging of our *Congregations, and* to practise *all those duties which* Christ *requires of you in order thereunto.*

I have much more to say of this particular, but I perceive that the Epistle swells to too great a bigness, and therefore I shall defer what I have further to say, till God shall offer me another such opportunity.

Ps. 133. 18 *Labour to maintain* Peace and Unity *amongst your selves.* It is a good
Mar. 5. 3c. and pleasant thing for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. Have salt in your selves, and peace one with another. *Labour to get your souls* seasoned *with the* grace of humility, self denial, *and* mortification; *and this will keep you in peace; Remember the saying of Christ;* Blessed are the Peacemakers. Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions

among

among you, but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

19 *Study often and often the* quatuor novissima, the four last things, Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven. *The* meditation *of* death *will* prepare you for death: *The* meditation of Heaven *will* make you Heavenly-minded: *The* meditation of Hell *will* keep you from Hell: *Therefore* Bernard *perswades us* to go often down to Hell by meditation while we live, and we shall not go down to it when we die. *The* meditation *of the* day *of* Judgment, *will be both* frænum & calcar, *a* Bridle *to curb you from sin, and a* Spur *to incite you to all godliness, that so you may give up your account with* joy, *at that terrible day.*

20 *Study the* exceeding great and precious Promises *of the Gospel, make a* Catalogue *of them,* meditate *on them, and labour to apply them to your own souls, for your everlasting comfort. And for this purpose, read over these Sermons, and study them in time of health, that you may enjoy the benefit of them in the time of sickness.*

Lastly, *Let me intreat you to* praise

God;

God *in my behalf*; *that he hath been pleaſed out of his free love to uphold me amongſt you in my* Miniſterial employment *for theſe eighteen years*; *And to continue your earneſt Prayers unto him, that he would make my labours more* uſeful *and* ſucceſsful; *that he would* guide me, *that I may* guide you; *that he would not only* make, *but* keep *me* faithful *in theſe back-ſliding times, and teach me* ſo to preach, and ſo to live, that I may ſave my ſelf and thoſe that hear me.

Your Servant in the Work of the Miniſtry,

Ed. Calamy.

THE

THE GODLY MAN's ARK,

OR, City of Refuge in the day of his Distress.

SERMON I.

Psal. 119. 92.

Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

THIS Psalm (out of which my Text is taken) exceeds all the other *Psalms*, not only in *length*, but in *excellency*, so far (in the judgement of *Ambrose*) as the light of the *Sun* excels the light of the *Moon*. As the Book of Psalms is stiled by *Luther*, *An Epitome of the Bible*, or, *A little Bible*.

So

So may this Pſalm fitly be called, *An Epitome of the Book of Pſalms.* It was written (as is thought) by *David* in the days of his baniſhment under *Saul*; but ſo penned, that the words thereof ſuit the condition of all Saints. It is *penu Doctrinæ publicum unicuique apta & convenientia diſtribuens*, *A publick ſtore-houſe* of heavenly Doctrines, diſtributing fit and convenient inſtructions to all the people of God; and therefore ſhould be in no leſs account with thoſe who are ſpiritually alive, than is the uſe of the *Sun*, *Air*, and *Fire*, with thoſe who are naturally alive: It is divided into two and twenty *Sections*, according to the *Hebrew Alphabet*, and therefore fitly called *A holy Alphabet for Sions Scholars*, the A. B. C. *of godlineſs*. *Sextus Senenſis* calls it, *An Alphabetical Poem*. The *Jews* are ſaid to teach it their little Children the firſt thing they learn, and therein they take a very right courſe, both in regard of the heavenly matter, and plain ſtile fitted for all capacities. The chief ſcope of it, is to ſet out the glorious *excellencies* and *perfections of the Law of*

God.

God. There is not a verse (except one only, say some learned men, in Print, but are therein deceived, but I may truly say, Except the 122. and the 90. verses) in this long Psalm, wherein there is not mention made of the Law of God, under the name of Law, or Statutes, or Precepts, or Testimonies, or Commandments, or Ordinances, or Word, or Promises, or Ways, or Judgments, or Name, or Righteousness, or Truth, *&c.*

This Text that I have chosen, sets out the great benefit and comfort which *David* found in the Law of God in the time of his affliction—— *It kept him from perishing, Had not thy Law been my delights, I had perished in my affliction.*

The word *Law* is taken diversly in Scripture, sometimes for the *Moral Law*, *James* 2. 10. Sometimes for the whole *Oeconomy*, *Polity*, and *Regiment* of *Moses*, for the whole *Mosaical dispensation*, by Laws partly Moral, partly Judicial, partly Ceremonial, *Gal.* 3. 23. Sometimes for the *five Books of Moses*, *Luke* 24. 44. Sometimes for the whole

whole *Doctrine of God* contained in the *Scriptures of the Old Testament*, Job 7.49. By Law in this place is meant, all those Books of the Scripture which were written when this Psalm was penned. But I shall handle it in a larger sense, as it comprehends all the Books both of the Old and New Testament. For the word *Law* is sometimes also taken for the *Gospel*, as it is *Micah* 4. 2. *Isa.* 2. 3. The meaning then is, *Unless thy Law*, that is, *Thy Word, had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction.*

David speaks this (saith *Musculus*) of the distressed condition he was in when persecuted by *Saul*, forced to fly to the *Philistines*, and sometimes to hide himself in the rocks and caves of the earth. *Hic vero simile est, fuisse illi ad manum codicem divinæ legis*, &c. It is very likely (saith he) that he had the Book of Gods Law with him, by the reading of which he mitigated and allayed his sorrows, and kept himself pure from communicating with the Heathen in their superstitions. The *Greek* Scholiasts say, That *David* uttered these words, *A Saule*

pulsus,

pulsus, & apud Philistæos & impios homines agere coactus, when driven from *Saul* and compelled to live amongst the wicked *Philistines*, &c. for he would have been allured to have communicated with them in their impieties, had he not carried about him the meditation of the Word of God. *Unless thy Law had been my delights*, &c.

In the words themselves, we have two Truths *supposed*, and one Truth clearly *proposed*.

1. Two Truths supposed.
   1. *That the dearest of Gods Saints are subject to many great and tedious afflictions.*
   2. *That the Word of God is the Saints darling and delights.*

One Truth clearly proposed.
That the Law of God delighted in, is the afflicted Saints Antidote against ruin, and destruction.

1. Two Truths supposed.

The first is this:

Doct. 1. *That the best of Gods Saints are in this life subject to many great and tedious afflictions.*

David

David was a man after Gods own heart, and yet he was a man made up of troubles of all sorts and sizes, insomuch as he professeth of himself, *Psal.*69.1,2,3. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my Soul, I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me; I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried, mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.* And in this Text he professeth that his afflictions were so great, that he must necessarily have perished under them, had he not been sustained by the powerful comforts he fetched out of the Word. There is an Emphasis in the word *Then, I should then have perished*; That is, long before this time; *then*, when I was afflicted, then I should have perished. *Junius* and *Tremelius* translate it, *Jam diu perissem, &c.* I should long ago have perished. *Job* was a man eminent for godliness; and yet as eminent for afflictions. Nay, Jesus Christ himself *was a man of sorrows*, Isa.53.3. Insomuch as that it is truly said, *God had one Son without sin, but no Son without sorrow.*

This

This our *dear Sister*, at whose Funeral we are met, was a woman full of many and great afflictions, which (no doubt) would have quite drowned and swallowed her up, had not the *Word of God* supported her; therefore it was that she desired that this Text might be the subject of her Funeral Sermon.

Quest. *But why doth God afflict his own Children with such variety of long and great afflictions?*

Answ. 1. God doth not do this, because he *hates* them, but because he *loves* them, *For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth*, &c. *Heb.* 12, 6. Did the Lord hate them, he would suffer them to go merrily to hell. *There is no surer sign of Gods reprobating anger, than to suffer a man to prosper in wicked courses.* God threatneth this as the greatest *punishment, not to punish them*, Hos. 4. 14. And therefore because God loveth his Children, *he chastiseth them in this world, that they may not be condemned in the world to come*, 1 Cor. 11. 33.

2. God doth not do this, because he would *hurt* them, but for their *good*, Jer. 24. 5. The good Figs

were

were sent into captivity for their *good*, Hebr. 12. 10. *He for our profit*, &c. God hath very gracious and merciful ends and aims in afflicting his people. Give me leave here to inlarge my discourse, and to give you an account of some of these divine Aims.

1. Gods design is to teach us to *know him* and *to trust in him*, and *to know our selves*. It is a true saying of *Luther*, *Schola crucis est Schola lucis*, the School of *Affliction* is a School of *Instruction*; Gods παδηματα, are μαδηματα: His *rods* (when sanctified) are powerful *Sermons* to teach us.

1, *To know God*: And *this is life eternal to know him*, John 17. 3. It is said of *Manasseh*, 2 Chron. 33. 13. *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God*. Then, when he was caught among the Thorns, bound with Fetters, and carryed to *Babylon*; before that time he knew not the Lord: Afflictions teach us to know God, and not only in his power and greatness, in his anger and hatred against sin, but also in his goodness and mercy: For *God*

doth

doth ſo *ſweeten* the bitter cup of affliction, that a Child of God doth many times taſt more of God's love in one months affliction, than in many years of proſperity; 2 *Cor.* 1. 4, 5. 2 *Cor.* 7. 4. Add to this, Afflictions teach us to know God *experimentally* and *affectionatively*, not *celebraliter*, (as *Calvin* ſaith) but *cordialiter*, ſo to know him, as to *love* and *fear* him, and to *fly* unto him as our Rock and hiding-place in the day of our diſtreſs. It is ſaid, *Cant.* 3. 1. *By night I ſought him whom my ſoul loveth*, &c. Some by the word *Night*, underſtand the night of divine deſertion; and from the words, *Gilbertus* hath this ſaying; *Qui quærit in nocte, non quærit ut videat, ſed ut amplectatur*; He that ſeeks after God in the night of adverſity, doth not ſeek to ſee him, and know him formally, and ſuperficially, but to embrace him, and to love him really and cordially. And therefore the Church never left till ſhe had found *Chriſt*, and when ſhe had found him, ſhe *held him*, and would not let him go, *Cant.* 3. 2, 3, 4.

2 Not only to know God, but also to trust in him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 9. *We had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.* Note here, 1. That an Apostle is apt in time of prosperity to trust in himself. 2. That God brings his Children to the gates of death, that they might learn not to trust in themselves, but in God which *raiseth the dead*, that is, from a dead and desperate condition.

3 Not only to know God, but to know our selves, which two are the chief parts of Christian Religion: It is said of the Prodigal, that when he was in adversity, then he *came to himself*, Luke 15. 17. *And when he came to himself*: He was *spiritually distracted*, when he was in *prosperity*. Afflictions teach us to know that we are but *men*, according to that of *David*, Psal. 9. 20. *Put them in fear, O Lord, that they may know themselves to be but men. Caligula* and *Domitian*, Emperours of *Rome*, who in prosperity would be called Gods, when it thundered from Heaven were so terrified,

that then they knew they were but men. In prosperity we forget our mortality: Adversity causeth us to know, not only that we are men, but frail men, that God hath us *between his hands*, (as it is *Ezek.* 21. 17.) and can as easily crush us, as we do Moths; That we are in *Gods hands, as the Clay in the hands of the Potter*; That he hath an absolute soveraignty over us, and that we depend upon him for our being, well-being, and eternal being; these things we know feelingly and practically in the day of affliction: And it much concerns us to know these things, and to know them powerfully; for this will make us stand in awe of God, and study to serve and please him. He that depends upon a man for his livelyhood, knowing that he hath him at an advantage, and can easily undo him, will certainly endeavour to comply with him, and to obtain his favour. *The ground of all service and obedience is dependance.* And did we really and experimentally know our dependence upon [illegible] and the advantages he hath

us that, we could not, we would not but comply with him, and labour above all things to gain his love and favour.

2. Gods aim in afflicting his children, is either to keep them from *sin*; or when they have sinned, *to bring them to repentance for it, and from it.*

1. *To keep them from sin*; This made him send an *Angel of Satan* to buffet *Paul*, lest he should be *lifted up in pride, and exalted above measure*, 2 Cor. 12. 7.

The second Design of God in afflicting his Children.

2. When they have sinned, to bring them to *repentance for it, and from it.* God brings his children *low*, not to *trample* upon them, but to make them *low in their own eyes*, and to *humble* them for sin, *Deut.* 8. 2. God brings them into the *deep waters*, not to *drown* them, but to *wash* and *cleanse* them. *Isa.* 27. 9. *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the Fruit to take away sins* &c. Afflictions (when sanctified) are divine hammers to break, and as *Moses* his rod, to cleave our rocky hearts in pieces.

1. They open the eyes to see sin. *Oculus quos culpa claudit*

When the Brethren of *Joseph* were in adversity, then they saw (and not before) the greatness of their sin in selling their Brother, *Gen.* 42. 21.

They open the ear *to discipline*. In prosperity we turn a deaf ear to the voice of the Charmer, though he charm never so wisely. But adversity openeth the ear, and causeth us to attend: When God spake upon Mount *Sinah* in a terrible manner, then the people said unto *Moses: Speak thou unto us, all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it*, Deut. 5. 27. Memorable is that Text, Jer. 2. 24. *A wilde Ass used to the Wilderness, that snuffeth up the winde at her pleasure, in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her, will not weary themselves, in her month they shall finde her*; *in her month*, that is, when she is great with young, and near her time. A wicked man in the day of his prosperity, is like a wilde Asse used to the Wilderness, he snuffeth at any that shall reprove him, he is of an uncircumcised ear, and a rebellious heart; *but in his month*, that is, when he is brought

with afflictions, then he will be easily found; this will open his ear to discipline.

3 They will open the *mouth to confess sin*; Judges 10.15.

4 They will *command us to depart from iniquity*, Job 36.8,9,10.

Afflictions are *Gods Furnaces*, to purge out the dross of our sins, *Gods Files* to pare off our spiritual rust, *Gods Fanns* to winnow out our chaffe. In prosperity we gather much soil, but adversity purgeth and purifieth us. This is its proper work, to work out unrighteousness, *Dan.* 11.35. *Dan.* 12.10.

The third Design.

3 Gods end is not only to keep us from sin, but to make us *holy and righteous*; therefore it is said, *Isa.* 26. 9. *When thy Judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* And Heb. 12.10. *He for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.* As the waters that drowned the old world, did not hurt the Ark of *Noah*, but bare it up above the earth, and as they increased, so the Ark was lifted up nearer and nearer to Heaven: So *Afflictions*

when

(when sanctified) do not prejudice the Saints of God, but lift them up nearer unto God in *Holiness and Heavenly-mindedness.*

4. Gods design in afflicting his children, is to make the *World bitter* unto them, and *Christ sweet.* The fourth Design.

1. To *imbitter the World*: There are two lame legs upon which all worldly things stand, *uncertainty* and *insufficiency.* All earthly things are like the earth, founded upon nothing; they are like *heaps made of wax*, that quickly melt away. Riches and Honours, Wife, and Children, have *wings and flie away*; they are like unto *Absalons Mule*, they will fail us when we have most need of them; They may *puffe up* the soul, but they cannot *satisfie it*, *instare possunt, satiare animam non possunt*: They are all vanity and vexation of spirit, so saith the *Preacher*, but most people in time of health, will not believe these things; but when some great sickness betides them, this is is as a *real Sermon*, to make out the truth of them; then they see, that a *Velvet Slipper* cannot cure the Gout, nor a *Golden Cup*

the head-ach, *Prov.* 10. 4. That riches avail not in the day of wrath; and this imbitters the world.

2. To make *Christ ſweet and precious.* When *Chriſt* and his *Diſciples* were in a ſhip together, *Mat.* 8. 25. It is ſaid, *That Chriſt was aſleep*; and as long as the Sea was calm, his Diſciples ſuffered him to ſleep, but when they were ready to be drowned, then they *awake Chriſt*; and ſaid, *Maſter, ſave us, we periſh.* Even the beſt of Saints when fatted, with outward plenty and abundance, are prone to ſuffer *Chriſt to lye aſleep within them*, and ſo neglect the lively actings of faith upon *Chriſt*; but when the ſtorms of affliction, and outward calamity begin to ariſe, and they are ready to be over-whelmed with diſtreſſes, then *None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt.*

5. Gods deſign in afflicting his children, is to *prove* and *improve* their graces.

1. To *prove* their graces, *Rev.* 2. 10. *Deut.* 8. 2. to prove the *truth*, and the *ſtrength* of them. 1 The *truth and ſincerity of their graces*; for this cauſe he loaded Job with afflic-

tions

ctions, to try whether he served God for his Cammels and Oxen, or for love to God. As *Solomons* sword tryed the *true Mother* from the *false*; so the Sword of affliction discovers the sincere Christian from the hypocrite. Distresses are *divine Touch-stones*, to try whether we be true or counterfeit Saints; *That grace is true, which upon tryal is found true.* 2. To try the strength of our *Graces*. For it requires a strong faith to endure great afflictions. That faith which will suffice for a little affliction, will not suffice for a great one. *Peter* had faith enough to come to Christ upon the Sea, but as soon as the storm began to arise, his faith began to fail, and Christ said: *Why art thou afraid, O thou of little faith?* Mat. 14. 30, 31. It must be a *strong Faith* that must keep us from sinking in the day of *great distress.*

2. To *Improve our Graces.* It is reported of the *Lioness*, that she leaves her young ones, till they have almost killed themselves with roaring and howling, and then at last gasp, she relieves them, and by

this means they become more courragious. So God brings his children into the deeps, and suffers *Jonah* to be three days and three nights in the belly of the Whale, and *David* to cry till his throat was *dry*, Psal. 69. 3 and suffers his Apostles to be all the night in a great storm till the fourth watch, and then he comes and rebukes the windes, and by this means he mightily increaseth their *patience* and *dependance* upon God, and their Faith in Christ. As the *Palm-tree*, the more it is depressed, the higher, stronger and fruitfuller it grows; So doth the graces of Gods people.

Lastly, Gods aim in afflicting his people, is to *put an edge upon their Prayers, and all their other holy Services.*

1 Upon *Prayer*: What a famous Prayer did *Manasseh* make, when he was under his Iron Fetters. It is thrice mentioned, 2 *Chron.* 33. 13. 18, 19. When *Paul* was struck off his horse, and struck with blindness, then he prayed to purpose. Therefore it is said, *Acts* 9. 11. *Behold he prayeth!* In prosperity we

pray

pray heavily and drowsily, but adversity adds wings to our prayers, *Isa.*26.16. The very Heathen Mariners cried aloud to God in a storm. It is an ordinary Saying, *Qui nescit orare discat navigare.* There are no Sailors so wicked, but they will pray when in a great storm.

2 Upon *Preaching*. Prosperity glutteth the spiritual appetite, Adversity whetteth it.

3 Upon a *Sacrament*. How sweet is a Sacrament to a true Saint after a long and great Sickness?

1 *It makes God and the Word of God precious.* If God sets our Cornfields on fire (as *Absalom* did *Joabs*) then he shall be sure to cause us to come running to him: And how sweet is a Text of Scripture to a childe of God in the hour of his distress?

By all this it appears, that God afflicts his children, not to *hurt them*, but to *help them*, and that God hath many glorious and gracious ends and aims in afflicting of them. Therefore it is that *David* saith of himself in 71. *verse* of this Psalm,

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. He never ſaid, it is good for me that I have been in proſperity, but he rather ſaith the contrary in the 67th verſe, *Before I was afflicted, I went aſtray, but now I have kept thy word.* *Gods People* will bleſs God as much (if not more) in *Heaven*, for their *adverſity* than for their *proſperity.*

Uſe 1. Let us not paſs *raſh cenſures* upon *Perſons* under great *afflictions*: Say not, ſuch a woman is a greater ſinner then others, becauſe more afflicted. This was the fault of *Jobs* friends, and God expreſſeth his anger againſt them for it, *Job.* 42. 7. *My wrath is kindled againſt thee, and thy two friends, for you have not ſpoken the thing that is right*, &c. This was the fault of the *Barbarians*, Acts 28. 4. *When they ſaw the venemous beaſt hang upon the hand of Paul, they ſaid among themſelves, no doubt this man is a murderer*; &c. But Remember they were *Barbarians*. It is a ſign of a *Barbarian*, not of a *Chriſtian* to paſs a raſh cenſure upon perſons in affli-

ction.

ction. *Think you* (ſaith Chriſt) *that thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower in* Siloam *fell and ſlew them, that they were ſinners above all men that dwelt in* Jeruſalem? *I tell you, nay, but except you repent, yee ſhall all likewiſe periſh*, Luke 13. 4. 5. Think you that they which have the Stone and Gout in extremity, that have Cancers in their faces and breaſts, are greater ſinners than others? I tell you nay, &c. For my part, if I would cenſure any, it ſhould be ſuch as live wickedly, and meet with no affliction; theſe have the *black brand* of reprobation upon them; Theſe are men deſigned to damnation. *Ambroſe* would not tarry a night in the Houſe of a Gentleman that had never in all his life been afflicted, for fear (as he ſaid) leſt ſome great and ſudden Judgement ſhould betide it. But when I ſee a godly woman afflicted, then I ſay, this is not ſo much for her ſin, as for her trial: this is not to *hurt her*, but to *teach her* to know God, and to know her ſelf, to break her heart for ſin, and from ſin, to make the world bitter, and

Christ sweet. God hath put her into the fire of affliction, to refine her, and make her a vessel fit for his use. God is striking her with the hammer of affliction, that she may be squared, and made ready to be laid in the heavenly *Jerusalem*.

Use 2. Here is *rich comfort to the children of God, under the greatest afflictions.* For the best of *Saints* are subject to the worst afflictions: This is the lot of all Gods Children, Christ himself not excepted. *Afflictions* (*in deed*) considered in their own nature, are evil things, and so are called, *Amos* 5. 13. They are part of the curse due to sin, the fruit of Gods revenging wrath; they are as a biting and stinging Serpent; and to a wicked man, remaining wicked, they are the beginning of Hell; *Unsanctified afflictions parboil a wicked man for Hell and Damnation.* But now to a Childe of God, they have lost both their name and nature, they are not *punishments* properly, but *chastisements*, not τίμωρίαι, but παιδεῖαι: They are not *satisfactory*, but *castigatory*. Jesus Christ hath taken away the *sting of*

these

these Serpents; they are not *fiery*, but Brazen Serpents, they have a *healing*, not a *hurting* power. Christ hath removed the curse and bitterness of them. As the wood sweetned the *waters of Marah*, Exod. 15. 25. So Christs Cross hath sweetned the bitterness of afflictions.

There are eight comfortable considerations, to chear the heart of a child of God in the day of his distress.

1 God never afflicts his people, but out of *pure necessity*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 6. *Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heavinesse.* As a most loving *Father*, never corrects his childe, but when he is forced to it: He willingly provides for his Childe, but punisheth him unwillingly. So God freely loadeth with his blessblessings, but he never chastiseth his children, but when forced to it; therefore he saith expressely, *Lam.* 3. 23. *He doth not afflict willingly*, Isa. 27. 1. *Fury is not in me*, It is we that put Thunder-bolts in Gods hand. If the Sun did not first draw up the vapours from the earth, there would never be any Thun-

dring,

dering or Lightning. God would never thunder from Heaven with his Judgments, if our sins did not first cry to Heaven for punishment. As Christ whipp'd the sellers of Oxen and Sheep, out of the Temple with a *whip made* (in all probability) of *their own Cords*; So God never scourgeth us, but it is with a whip made of our own sins, *Prov.* 5. 22. *Rom.* 2. 5. *Thou treasurest up to thy self*, &c. God hath a *double treasure*, a *treasure of mercy*, and a *treasure of wrath*; his *treasure of mercy* is alwaies full, but his *treasure of wrath* is empty, till we fill it by our sins: And therefore when God punisheth his Children, he calls it a *strange work*, and a *strange act*, Isa. 28. 21. It is observed of the Bee, that it never stings but when provoked: Sure I am, that God never afflicts his Children, but out of pure necessity.

1 Not only out of *pure necessity*, but out of true and real love; as I have shewed, *Heb.* 12. 6, 7, 8.

Obj. *Do not divine afflictions proceed out of anger? Was not God angry with* Moses *for speaking unad-*

visedly

viſedly with his lips? And angry with David *for his Adultery, and thereupon afflicted both of them?*

Anſw. This anger was a fatherly anger rooted in love; It was not *ira quæ reprobat*, but *ira quæ purgat*. It was not *ira hoſtilis & exterminativa*, but *ira paterna & medicinalis*. As it is a great puniſhment for God ſometimes not to puniſh, *Iſa.* 1. 5. *Hoſ.* 4. 14. So it is a great mercy, ſometimes for God to with-draw his mercy.

3 Afflictions are a part of *Divine Predeſtination*. That God which hath *elected* us to *ſalvation*, hath alſo *elected us unto afflictions*, 1 Theſ. 1. 2. *That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions; for you your ſelves know that we are appointed thereunto.* The ſame love with which God elects us, and beſtoweth Chriſt, and his Spirit upon us, with the very ſame love he afflicts us.

4 They are part of the *gracious Covenant* which God hath made with his people, *Pſal.* 89. 31, 32, 33. In which words we have three things conſiderable.

1 A ſuppoſition of ſin; *If his*

Children

children forsake my Law, &c. For sin is always *causa sine qua non*, the cause without which God will never chastise us, and for the most part it is the cause for which he doth chastise us.

2. We have a gracious promise, *Then I will visit their transgression with the Rod, and their iniquity with stripes.*

3. We have a merciful qualification: *Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail, my Covenant will I not break*, &c. Afflictions are not only *mercies*, but *Covenant-mercies*; therefore *David* saith *Psal.* 119. 75. --- *And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* God would be *unfaithful*, if he did not afflict his children.

5 Consider that afflictions are part of the *Saints blessedness*. Job 5. 17. *Behold! happy is the man whom God correcteth, &c. Behold* (saith *Eliphaz*) and we had need behold, and consider it, for there are few that believe it, and yet it is most true; That afflictions (when sanctified) when they are not only corre-

corrections but *instructions*, then they are evidences that we are in a blessed condition. *Eliphaz* his saying must be interpreted by what *David* saith, *Psal.* 94. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastnest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law:* It is not *correction* simply, but *correction* joyned with *instruction*, which intitles us to happiness. *Job even while he was upon the dung-hill, wonders that God should set his heart so much upon him, as to visit him every morning, and to try him every moment*, Job 7. 17, 18. *Job* upon the Dung hill was happier than *Adam* in Paradise: *Adam* in Paradise was conquered by the Devil; but *Job* upon the Dung-hill overcame the Devil. *Lazarus* in his Raggs, was happier than *Dives* in his Robes; *Philpot* in his Cole-house, then *Bonner* in his Palace; and godly Mr. *Whitaker* upon his bed of pain, than a wicked man upon his bed of Down. There were many in Christs time, who would never have known him, or come to him, had it not been for their bodily diseases.

6. Consider the *gracious and merciful*

ciful ends, aims, and designs, that God hath in afflicting his people; what these are, ye have heard already.

7 The *sweet and precious Promises,* which he hath made to his Children in the day of their adversity, to comfort them, and support them; what these are, you shall hear afterwards.

8 Consider that all *afflictions* shall work at last for the good of *Gods Children,* Rom. 8. 28. Though they are not *bona,* yet they shall be *in bonum*; though they are not good in themselves, yet they shall turn to their good. God beats his children, as we do our cloaths *in the Sun,* only to beat out the *Moths*; God puts them into the fiery Furnace, not to hurt them, but only to *unty the bonds of their sins*; as he dealt with the three children, *Dan.* 3. 25. God will either deliver them out of their *afflictions,* or send them to Heaven by them; Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Use 3. If the best of Saints are subject

ſubject in this life unto many great and tedious *afflictions*, then let us.

1 *Expect*
2 *Prepare* for } *Afflictions.*
3 *Improve*

1 Let us *expect afflictions*; for Chriſt hath ſaid expreſly, *John* 16. 33. *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation.* There is in every child of God.

1 *Sufficiens Fundamentum, a ſufficient foundation* for God to build *a houſe of Correction* upon: There is ſin enough to deſerve affliction.

2 There is *Sufficiens Motivum, Motives ſufficient* to prevail with God to chaſtiſe them when they ſin againſt him; ſome of theſe you have heard already, let me add one more: Becauſe he is more diſhonoured by the ſins of his own children, than by the ſins of wicked men; As it is a greater diſcredit to an *Earthly Father*, when his own children, than when other mens children, live wickedly; ſo it is a *greater diſparagement* to our *heavenly Father* when his own Sons and Daughters, than when the Devils

Children

Children transgress his Law: And therefore God will chastise them *sooner, surer,* and *more* then others. 1 *Sooner,* Rom 2. 9. *Tribulation & anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* First, the Jew, and then the Gentile. 2. *Surer* then others, *Amos* 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the Families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* 3. *More* than others, *Lam.* 4. 6. *The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people, is greater then the punishment of the sin of Sodom, &c.* Dan. 9. 12. *Under the whole Heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon* Jerusalem.

3 There is *sufficiens necessitas, sufficient necessity* to provoke God to afflict them. It is needful that the Wheat be winnowed, that so the chaffe may be separated from it. It is needful that the wind blow upon the wheat, to cleanse it, and that Gold be put into the Furnace, to purge and purifie it. When the *Sheep of Christ* are divided one from the other in Judgement and Affections, when separated in *Doctrine,*

Wor-

Worſhip and *Diſcipline*. It is very needful that God ſhould ſend afflictions and diſtreſſes, which may be (as the *Shepherds Dog*) very ſerviceable and inſtrumental, to unite them together, and to gather them into one *Sheep-fold*. And therefore let the Saints of God expect afflictions.

2. Let us *prepare and provide againſt the day of tribulation*. Let us provide,

1 *A ſtock of Graces*. For ſickneſs is a time to ſpend grace, but not to get grace. A Chriſtian in ſickneſs without grace, is like a ſouldier in war without armour, like a houſe in ſtormy weather without a foundation, and like the men of the old world, when ready to be drowned, without an Ark. Wo be to that perſon that hath his graces to get when he ſhould uſe them! And therefore if we would be comforted in the day of tribulation, we muſt provide afore-hand a furniture of graces.

Gods people are to prepare for Afflictions.

1 A ſtock of graces.

1 *A true Faith* (for a *painted Faith* will avail no more, then a *painted Helmet*, or a *painted Ship*) and not only a *True*, but alſo a *ſtrong Faith*.

A

A little faith will faint under great afflictions; when the windes began to blow fiercely, *Peters* little Faith began to fail. *Mat.* 14. 30.

2 *A great measure of patience* to inable us to wait quietly and contentedly, till God come in with help, for many times he tarrieth till the fourth watch of the Night, as he did, *Matth.* 14. 25. And therefore we have need of patience to keep us from murmuring or repining.

¶ A stock of Assurance.

3 *A great stock of self-denyal, humility, repentance, contempt of the world, and Heavenly-mindedness.* He that is furnished with grace in an evil hour, will be as safe and secure, as *Noah* was in the Ark, in the time of the deluge, or as those were, who had sufficiency of Corn in the time of the seven years Dearth in *Egypt*.

2 *A stock of assurance of salvation:* For though a man hath never so much grace, yet if he wants the assurance of it, he cannot receive any comfort by it in the day of his distresse. *Jacob* was not at all quieted in his spirit, for *Joseph* being alive, till he came to know of it. And therefore

fore we must not onely provide *grace*, but the assurance of *grace* that we may be able to say with confidence, as *Job* did upon the Dunghil, *Job.* 19. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; and with the Holy Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 38. *I am perswaded, that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* That man who hath got a Scripture assurance of his Salvation, will be more than a Conquerour in the day of his distress.

3 *A stock of divine Experiences.* Happy is that man that lodgeth up in his heart all the former Experiences he hath had of Gods love and mercy towards him, and knoweth how to argue from them in the day of calamity: Thus did *Moses* in his prayer to God, *Numb.* 14. 19. *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this People, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now.* Because God

3 A stock of Divine Experiences.

God had forgiven them, therefore *Moſes* entreats him to forgive them; this Argument is drawn from former experience. And thus *David* encourageth himſelf, 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. *The Lord hath delivered me out of the Paw of the Lyon, and out of the Paw of the Bear, and he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtine.* Thus alſo *Paul* reaſoneth, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver, and in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us.* Divine experiences are the Saints great encouragements in the day of Affliction. Bleſſed is the man that hath his Quiver full of theſe Arrows.

4 A ſtock of Sermons

4 A ſtock of Sermons. We muſt do with Sermons as the Tradeſmen do with the money they get; ſome of it they lay out for their preſent uſe, and ſome of it they lay up againſt the time of ſickneſs. That man is an ill husband, and an unthrifty Tradeſman that makes no proviſion for old age, for for an evil day; and that man is an unprofitable hearer of the word, who doth not ſtock and ſtore himſelf with Sermons, whereby he may be

comforted in the hour of affliction. And therefore the Prophet *Isaiah* adviseth us, *Isa.* 42. 23. *To hear for the time to come*, or (as it is in the Hebrew) *for the after-time*. Sermons are not only to be heard for our present use, but to be laid up for after-times, that when we lye upon our sick-beds, and cannot hear Sermons, we may then live upon the Sermons we have heard.

5 And lastly, we must prepare and provide a stock of *Scripture-Promises*, which will be as so many reviving Cordials, to chear us, and as so many *Spiritual Anchors*, to uphold us from perishing in the day of our tribulation. What these Promises are, you shall hear afterwards: These upheld *David* in the hour of his distress, and therefore he saith in the Text, *Unless thy Law had been my delight, I had perished in mine affliction.* If this our *dear Sister* had not had this stock, she had been quite *over-whelmed* under the grievousness of her tormenting pains. Be wise therefore, *O ye Saints of God*, and prepare these five provisions in the time of health, that

5 A stock of Scripture-Promises.

so you may live joyfully in the time of sickness.

3 Gods people are to improve afflictions.

3 As we must expect and provide for afflictions, so also we must labour (when afflicted) *to improve them for our Spiritual benefit and advantage.* We must pray more for the sanctification of them, than for their removal: It was not the *staffe* of *Elisha* that revived the dead Child, but *Elisha* himself. It was not the *troubling* of the *waters* of the Pool of *Bethesda*, that made them healing, but the coming down of the *Angel*, It was not the *Clay and Spittle* that cured the blind eyes, but *Christs anointing* them with it. It was not the *Cloak* of *Elijah* that divided the waters, but the God of *Elijah*: Troubles, strokes, blows, afflictions and distresses will do us no good unless the Lord be pleased to make them effectual: And therefore let us pray unto God, that he would give us grace together with our afflictions, That he would add *instruction* to his *correction*, that he would make us *good Scholars* in *the School of afflictions*, and enable us to take out all those excellent

leſſons, which he would have us to learn in it, that thereby he may come to know God *more powerfully, and experimentally, and to know our ſelves, and our own frailty, and our abſolute dependance upon God more effectually*; that thereby we may be more *purified* and *refined*, that the *wind* of *temptation* may cleanſe us from the *chaff* of our *corruption*; that we may *learn Righteouſneſs* by Gods *Judgments*, and be made partakers of his *Holineſs*. Such a good Scholar was *Manaſſeh*, he got more good by his *Iron Chain*, than by his *Golden Chain*. Such another was the *Prodigal Child*, who was happier amongſt the *Swine*, then when in his *Fathers houſe*. Such was *Paul*, his being *ſtricken* down to the ground, raiſed him up to Heaven; by the blindneſs of his body, his ſoul received ſight; and he was turned from a perſecuting *Saul*, to a perſecuted *Paul*. Such another was *David*, who profeſſeth of himſelf, *that it was good for him that he was afflicted*; and ſuch Scholars ought we to be.

There are ſome that are *arrant*

Dunces in this School, that are like unto the *Bush* which *Moses* saw, which burned with fire, but was not consumed; the Fire did not consume the *Thorny* Bush. Many such *Thorny* Sinners are burnt up with the Fire of Divine Afflictions, but their sins are not consumed: Of these the Prophets complain, *Amos* 4. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *Yet they have not returned, &c.* Jer. 5. 3. *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder then a Rock, they have refused to return.* Rocks and stones by hewing & polishing may be made fit for a Building but there are some men, who by no afflictions will be amended. *The Mountains melt at the Presence of the Lord, and the Rocks rend asunder when he is angry*: But there are some that have made their *faces* harder than the Rocks and the *Mountains*, and are not at all affected with Gods anger. Of such as these *Bernard* complains, *Multi humiliati, pauci humiles, corripimur, sed non corrigimur, plectimur, sed non flectimur;*

Multo

Multo facilius fregeris quam flexeris. Non ceſſant vitia civium uſque ad excidia civitatum; Prius eſt interire quam corrigi. Prius ipſos, quam in ipſis vitia non eſſe.

There are others that are the *worſe for their afflictions*, like the *Smiths Anvil*, the more they are ſtricken, the harder they are: Such a one was King *Ahaz*, 2 *Chron.* 28.20. *In the time of his diſtreſs he did treſpaſs yet more againſt the Lord*: There is a brand put upon him.--- This is that King *Ahaz*, that wicked King *Ahaz*, that Reprobate King *Ahaz*. As Pearls put in Vineger, loſe their colour and beauty; ſo many, when under Gods hand, loſe all their glory and excellency, and begin to diſtruſt Gods Providence, to call his juſtice into queſtion, to murmur and repine againſt Gods dealings, and to uſe unlawful means for their deliverance. Of theſe the Prophet *Iſaiah* complains, *Iſa.* 1.5. *why ſhould you be ſtricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more*: Such was *Ahaziah*, 2 Kings 1.2. that ſought for help from *Baalzebub the God of Ekron*; and ſuch

was *Saul*, who sought to the Witch of *Endor* for health in the day of his distress.

Both of these sorts are in a sad and miserable condition; For God hath two Furnaces, the *Furnace of affliction*, and the *Furnace of Hell-fire*. If the first Furnace will not purge us, the second will everlastingly consume us. As the *Roman Consuls* had a man appointed to go before them, carrying a *Rod* and an *Axe*, a *Rod* for the punishing of *corrigible Offenders*, an *Axe* for the destruction of *incorrigible*; So God hath his *Rod*, and his *Axe*, his *Pruning-Knife*, and his *Chopping-Knife*, his *Warning-pieces* and his *Murdering-pieces*. Afflictions are his *Rods* to correct us for our sin, his *Pruning-Knife*, to pare off our luxuriant branches; his *Warning-Pieces* to call upon us to repent.

But if his *Warning-Pieces* will do us no good, we must expect his *Murdering-pieces*. If his *Pruning-knife* will not amend us, his *Chopping-Knife* will confound us. If his *Rods* will not reclaim us, then his *Axe* will hew us down, and cast us into everlasting

ing

ing fire. God hath *three houſes*, the *houſe of Inſtruction*, *of Correction*, *and of Deſtruction*, The place where Gods people meet to hear his Word, is his *houſe of Inſtruction*; and if we profit in this houſe, he will never carry us unto the *houſe of Correction*; But if we be ſtubborn and rebellious in the *houſe of Inſtruction*, then he will ſend us to the *houſe of Correction*; and if we profit in this houſe, he will never ſend us into the *houſe of Deſtruction*: but if we continue incorrigible in the *houſe of Correction*, he will inevitably ſend us to the *houſe of Deſtruction*, that is, unto Hell-fire.

And therefore, whenſoever God brings us into the School of affliction, let us labour to be good Scholars in it, and to anſwer all thoſe ends, aims, and deſigns which God hath in afflicting of us. Let us pray to God that our afflictions may be divine Hammers to break our hearts for ſin, and from ſin; may make the *world bitter*, and *Chriſt more precious*; may *prove* and *improve* our graces, and may put an *edge* upon all holy duties.

There are two things I would have you in an especial manner to labour after:

1. *Labour when afflicted, to know the meaning of Gods Rod.*

2. *That the good you get by afflictions may abide upon you after your recovery from them.*

God's people are to labour to know the meaning of Gods Rod.

1 You must labour to know the meaning of Gods Rod, and what the particular errant is which he hath to you in the day of your distresses; you must do as *David* did, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. He enquired of the Lord, *to know the reason why he sent a Famine amongst them.* So must you, you must pray as *Job* doth, *Job* 10. 2. *Shew me, O Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me?* When the cause of a disease is found out, it is half cured. Your great care therefore must be to study to know the particular cause and reason, why God turns your prosperity into adversity. The Prophet *Micah* tells us, *Micah* 6. 9. *That the Rod hath a voice,* and that the *Man of wisdom shall see Gods Name upon it.* There is a great measure of spiritual Art and Wisdom required to enable a man to hear

hear this voice, and to understand the language of it. A spiritual Fool cannot do it.

Quest. *What must we do, that we may understand the voice of the Rod?* How we may know the meaning of Gods Rod.

Ans. You must know that the Rod of God ordinarily speaks *three Languages*; it is sent for *correction for sin*, for the *tryal* and *exercise of grace*, and for *instruction in holiness*. Sometimes indeed it is sent only for *tryal* and *instruction*, and not at all for sin. Upon this account was *Job* afflicted, and the blind man, *Joh.* 9. 3. But for the most part it hath a *threefold voice*; it is appointed for *instruction, probation*, and also for *Correction*, Lam. 3. 39. Isa. 42. 24. Luke 1. 20. 1 Cor. 11. 30.

Quest. *How shall a man know whether his afflictions be only for* trial and instruction, *and not at all for sin?*

Answ. The safest and best way for a Christian in this case, is to believe that all his afflictions are both for *trial* and *instruction*, and also for sin: Indeed when he seeth another man, who is very Godly, grievously diseased, he may charitably

tably believe, that this is for his trial, and not for his sin; but when it is his own case, then (as Dr. *Ames* saith most excellently) *Æquissimum, tutissimum, & Deo gratissimum est, ut in afflictonibus omnibus peccata nostra intueamur, quæ illas vel directe procurarunt, vel saltem promeruerunt. Quamvis enim omnes afflictiones non immittantur semper directe & perpetuo propter peccatum, peccatum tamen est omnium afflictionum fons & fundamentum*, Rom. 5. 12.---- "it is most equal, most safe, and "most acceptable to God, to have "an eye upon our sins, which have "either directly procured them, or "at least deserved them. For though "afflictions are not always sent di- "rectly and especially for sin, yet "sin is the Original and Foundation "of all afflictions.

Quest. *What Course must we take to find out what that* sin *is in* particular *for which God corrects us?*

How to find out the particular sin for which God afflicts us.

Answ. 1. Sometimes we may read our sin in our punishment. *Adonibezek*, though a heathen King, did this, Judg. 1. 7. *Threescore and ten Kings, having their Thumbs and*

their

their great Toes cut off, gathered their Meat under my table; as I have done, ſo God hath requited me. I read of holy *Ephraim*, that he was converted by the ſuitableneſs of his affliction unto the ſin he had committed, for he ſaw clearly that his miſery came not by chance, but from God immediately, and for ſin. As a man may ſometime gather the diſeaſe of the Patient, by obſerving the Phyſitians Bill; ſo he may gueſs at his ſin, by conſidering his puniſhment.

2 Conſider *what that ſin* is for which thy Conſcience doth moſt of all accuſe thee. Conſcience is Gods Vicegerent, his boſom-Preacher. And when we ſleight the voice of Conſcience, God ſeconds it with the voice of his Rod, which ſpeaks the very ſame Language that Conſcience doth.

3 Conſider what is the ſin of thy *Complexion*, and *Conſtitution*, what is thy *dilectum delictum*, thy *peccatum in deliciis*, thy beloved ſin; what is that ſin to which thou art moſt of all inclined; and if that ſin prevail over thee, and thou canſt

not say with *David*, Psal. 18.23. *I have kept my self from mine iniquity.* It is very probable that for the subduing of that sin, thou art corrected of God.

4 If ever thou hast been at the gates of death, despairing of life, consider what that sin was, which did then most of all trouble and perplex thy Conscience; or if ever thou hast been in a Dream, supposing thy self to be dying, and breathing out thy last; what was that sin which did then most of all affright thee: It is very likely that God by afflicting thee, intends to get that sin more conquered and mortified.

5 Consider what those sins are for which thy *godly Minister* (under whose care thou livest) doth reprove thee, and of which thy *true* and *real friends* do accuse thee, for, if thou hast sleighted the voice of thy faithful Minister and Friends, surely *God* out of his love to thee, followeth their advice with the voice of his Rod, that thereby he may open thine ear to Discipline, and command thee to depart from those iniquities.

But if thou canſt not find out that *particular ſin*, for which God afflicts thee, labour to repent of every ſin, and then thou wilt be ſure to repent of that ſin. If thou canſt not find out the Bee that ſtings thee, pull down the whole *Hive*, or the *Thorn* that pricks thee, pull down the whole *Hedge*. Do that out of wiſdom, which *Herod* did out of malice, who becauſe he could not find out the *Babe Jeſus*, *killed all the Children in* Bethelem, *from two years old, and under, that ſo he might be ſure to kill Jeſus*. Let us ſeek the utter ruin & death of all our ſins, and then we ſhall be ſure to deſtroy that ſin for which God afflicts us, and when the cauſe is removed, the diſeaſe will forthwith be cured, and the Almighty pacified, and reconciled unto us.

4. Let us *labour that the good we reap by our afflictions, may abide upon us after our recovery from them*. There are very many who while they are under the Rod, ſeem to be very penitent, and do purpoſe and promiſe to amend their lives, but as ſoon as the Rod is removed, they return.

The good we get by our afflictions muſt remain with us after our recovery.

return like the Dog to the Vomit, *&c.* Such was *Pharoah*, whilst he was plagued he confeſſed his ſin, and prayed for pardon; but as ſoon as ever the Judgment was gone, he hardned his heart. Such were the *Iſraelites*, Pſal. 78. 34, 35, 36, 37. *They were not ſtedfaſt, they turned back.* Juſt like a truantly School-boy, who while his Maſter is whipping him, will promiſe any thing, but when it is done, forgets preſently to do what he promiſed: Or like unto *water*, which while it is upon the fire is *very hot*, but as ſoon as ever it is taken off the fire, preſently groweth cold. I knew a man who in the time of his ſickneſs was ſo terrified in his Conſcience for his ſins, that he made the very Bed to ſhake, upon which he lay, and cryed out all night long, *I am damned, I am damned*, and made many and great Proteſtations of amendment of life, if God would be pleaſed to recover him: In a little while he did recover; and being recovered, was as bad, and as wicked as ever before.

And therefore let us labour that the

the good we get by our affliction may not vaniſh away with our afflictions, but may abide on us after we are recovered, that we may be able to ſay with *David*, *it is good for me that I was afflicted*; not only that *I am*, but *that I was*; *David* praiſeth God in health for the good he had got in ſickneſs, and which ſtill abode with him. Let us ſay with the ſame Prophet, *Pſal* 66. 13, 14. *I will go into thy Houſe with burnt-Offerings, I will pay thee my Vows which my Lips have uttered, and my mouth have ſpoken, when I was in trouble.* Let us pray unto God that his affliction may not only skin over our ſpiritual diſeaſes, and coup up our ſins, but mortifie them, and ſo change our natures, that we may never return to folly.

I will conclude this point with a famous ſaying of *Plinius ſecundus*, worthy to be written in Letters of Gold. A friend writes to him, and intreats him to give him advice how to frame his life, ſo as he might live as becomes a good man: He returns him this anſwer; I will not preſcribe many Rules, there is

this

this one only which I commend to thee above all other, *Ut tales esse perseverimus sani, qualesnos futuros profitemur infirmi, Let us labour to continue and persevere to be such, when we are well, as we purpose and promise to our selves to be, when we are sick.* There is hardly any man so wicked, but he will in sickness make many and great Promises of a new life, and of universal reformation, if God would restore him. Now then, if we not only be such, but continue to be such when restored, as we promise to be when sick, then we shall be excellent *Scholars* in the School of affliction, and God will either (as I have already said) deliver us out of affliction, or send us to Heaven by affliction. So much for the first truth suppoſed,

The End of the first Sermon.

THE

THE WORD of GOD IS THE Saints Delight.

SERMON II.

Psal. 119. 92.

Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

NOW I come to speak of the second Truth supposed in the Text,

That the Word of God is the Saints darling, and delights; Not only their *delight*, but in the plural number, their *delights*; that is, (as our *Annotations* say) a Saint doth greatly delight in Gods Law; or as *Junius*, All the delight of a Saint is in Gods Law; Gods Word is the Center of his Delights, *Nisi*

lex

lex tua erat omnis oblectatio mea; Many were the troubles and sorrows of *Davids* life, but against them all he found as many comforts and delectations in Gods Word; therefore he saith, verſ. 29. *Thy Teſtimonies are my delights*, &c. and 143. *Trouble and anguiſh have taken hold on me, yet thy Commandments are my delights*: And in the Text, *Unleſs thy Law had been my delights*, &c. Whilſt others delight in vanity and iniquity, whilſt others take pleaſure in Hunting, Hawking, Carding, Dicing, Eating, and Drinking, the Saints of God can ſay with *Auſtin*, *Sacræ Scripturæ tuæ ſunt ſanctæ deliciæ meæ*, *Thy Holy Scriptures are my holy delights*.

Queſt. *Why do the Saints of God take ſuch delight in the Law of God?*

Reaſons why the Saints take ſo much delight in Gods Law.

Anſw. 1. Becauſe they are ſpiritually inlightened; their eyes are opened to behold the glory and beauty, and to underſtand the deep Myſteries of the Law; therefore *David* prayeth, *verſ.* 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law.* As the Apoſtle ſaith of the Jews, 2 *Cor.* 3. 14, 15.

That to this day there is a vail over their hearts when Moses *is read; and when they ſhall return to the Lord, this vail ſhall be removed:* So it is with Chriſtians; when a wicked man reads the Word, there is a vail over his eyes, and over his heart, and over the Scriptures, *The God of this World hath ſo blinded his eyes,* that he cannot behold the beauty and glory of them; but the true Saint hath this vail removed: Chriſt hath anointed his eyes with *Spiritual* Eye-*ſalve*; he ſeeth a ſurpaſſing excellency in the Word of God, and therefore cannot but delight in it.

2 Becauſe they are not only *enlightned*, but *regenerated*; And as Children new born by the inſtinct of nature, have a natural Appetite to milk for converſation of their life; ſo the new born Saint, by the inſtinct of grace, hath a ſpiritual appetite to the Word of God; according to that of Saint *Peter*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* The Word of God is the Saints food, and as it is impoſſible for

for a Child unborn to desire food, so for a man unregenerated to hunger after, and take true pleasure in the Word; and as it is impossible for a new-born child, not to delight in Milk, so it is as impossible for a regenerate Christian, not to delight in the Law of God.

3 Because a true Saint hath the Law of God *written in his heart*, according to that precious Promise of the Covenant of Grace, *Jer.* 31.33. *I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.* A Saints heart is the counterpain to Gods Law. The Law is within his heart, *Psal.* 40.8 and as it is in the *Hebrew*, in the midst of his bowels, *medio viscerum.* God hath infused a principle of Grace into his inward parts, whereby he is not only inclined, but inabled to walk in all the Commandements of the Law, blameless. A true Saint hides the Law in his heart, as a *choice Jewel* in a most precious Cabinet, as *David* saith *ver.* 9. *I have hid thy Law in my heart*; Hid it as a rare Treasure. So doth every Saint, and therefore cannot but delight in it.

4 Be-

4 Because the same *holy Spirit* that wrote the word, *dwelleth in every true Saint.* It is certain that all Scripture is of *Divine inspiration*, and that the *holy men of God spake, as they were guided by the holy Ghost.* And it is as certain, That the same Holy Ghost dwelleth in every Saint, *Rom.* 8. 11. And by vertue of the in-dwelling of the Spirit, they are sweetly and powerfully drawn to make the Law of God their chiefest delight.

5 Because it is *Gods Inditement, and Invention.* This reason is brought in the Text, *Unless thy Law*, &c. It is the Law of that God in whom they delight. It transcribes the mind and heart of God. A true Saint seeth the *Name, Authority, Power, Wisdom*, and *Goodness* of God in every letter of it, and therefore cannot but take pleasure in it. It is an Epistle sent down to him from the God of Heaven. It is one of the greatest *Love-tokens* that ever God gave to his Church. There are two great Gifts that *God* hath given to his people. The *word Christ*; and the *word of Christ*. Both are unspeakably

ably great; but the first will do us no good without the second.

6 A true Saint cannot but delight in the Word of God, because it is his *inheritance*, vers. 111. *Thy Testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoycing of my heart.* Therefore they were the rejoycing of his heart, because they were his everlasting Inheritance,

7 Because he finds a sweetness in it. Delight is nothing else but a passion of the soul, arising from the sweetness of the object that we enjoy. Things that are good, pleasant, suitable and sweet, are the object of our delights, such is the Word of God to every true Saint; it is *sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb*, Psal. 19. 10. So also *Psal.* 119. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.* A Saint must needs delight in it, it is so suitable, and so sweet.

8 Because he *loves the Law.* Now that which we love, we cannot but delight in, when we come to enjoy it. A true Saint doth not only love the Law, but he loves it exceed-

ceedingly, *Psal.* 119.167. *My soul hath kept thy Testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* A true Saint can say with *David*, Psal. 119.97. *O how do I love thy Law!* And vers. 127. *I love thy Commandments above Gold, yea, above fine Gold.* And vers. 72. *The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.* Now because the Saints of God are so inamoured with the Law of God, therefore it is that they cannot but delight in it, as *David* saith, *Psal.* 119.47. *I will delight my self in thy Commandments, which I have loved.* He that loves the Commandments (as all Saints do) cannot but delight in them.

Use. This shews that there are but few *true Saints* amongst us. There are many *bastard Saints*, and *nominal Saints*, but few true and real Saints. We live in an age wherein there were never more *Saints*, and never fewer, never more by outward *Profession*, and never fewer by a holy *Conversation*. It is the property of a true Saint to make the Word of God his darling and delights.

But

But where ſhall we find ſuch Saints? It is eaſie to find out men that can ſay, *Eating and Drinking is my delight, Carding and Dicing is my delight, Reading of vain and triſling books is my delight, to ſatisfie the luſt of the fleſh is my delight.* But where is the man that can truly ſay as *David* doth? *The Law of God is my delights, and the joy and rejoycing of my heart for ever.* *Auſtin* profeſſeth of himſelf, that before his *Converſion*, he took no pleaſure in the Word of God: His proud heart (as he ſaith) would not ſtoop to the humble expreſſions of it: After *his Converſion*, he was raviſhed with the beauty and excellency of the Scriptures; but before his Converſion, he ſaw no excellency in them. *Politian* (though a great Scholar, yet a notorious Atheiſt) profeſſeth moſt blaſphemouſly, that he never loſt more time, then in reading the Scripture. And it is reported of *Plato*, that when he had read the firſt Chapter of *Geneſis*, he ſaid, *hic vir multa dicit, ſed nihil probat*: This man ſaith many things, but proveth nothing. Where ſhall we

find the man that puts a due estimation upon the Word of God? That prizeth it above *Gold, yea, above much fine Gold? That rejoyceth in thy word, as much as in all riches*, vers. 14. That can appeal to God, and say as *David*, vers. 159. *Consider, O Lord, how I love thy Precepts*; and Vers. 97. *Oh how do I love thy Law?* There are some men that can delight in any thing but in God and his Word, and his Ordinances: They can delight in the Creatures of God, but cannot delight in the Ordinances of God. They can delight in the Gifts of God, in Riches, and Health, and Honours: But they cannot delight in the God of these Gifts. They can delight in Books of Philosophy and Humanity, but they cannot delight in the Word of God.

Mark the sad condition that these are in.

It is a certain sign that there is a vail over their eyes and hearts, that they are not yet annointed with Christs *eye-salve*, that the God of the World hath blinded their eyes, that they cannot see the glorious excel-

cellencies of the Law of God.

It is certain, that they are not *born anew*, for if they were new born Babes, they would desire the sincere Milk of the Word.

It is certain that the *Law of God* is not yet *written in their hearts*; and that the *Spirit of God* doth not dwell in them. It is certain, that they have no part nor portion in the Word of God, that they never tasted the sweetness that is in it, and that they have no true love to God, nor to his Word. It is a true saying. *Qui Regem amat, Legem amat*, he that loves a King, will love his Law. And I may say, *Qui Deum amat, Legem Dei amat*: He that loves God, will love the *Law of God*, which is nothing else but his Image, and his Picture, his last Will and Testament, his blessed Love-token: And therefore if you delight not in the *Law of God*, it is evident you do not delight in the God of this Law. And if you delight not in God, he will not delight in you; unless it be to *laugh at your destruction*, as it is *Prov.* 1. 26.

Quest. *But how shall I know whether*

that I do delight in the Word of God, or no?

Anſ. You ſhall know it by theſe Notes.

1 He that delights in Gods Law, will be very frequent in *meditating* and *reading* of it, and very often in ſpeaking of it. Thus ſaith *David*, Pſal. 1. 2. *His delight is in the Law of the Lord, and therein he will meditate day and night.* And *Pſal.* 119. 97. *Oh how do I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.* So alſo, verſ. 15. 16. 23. He that takes pleaſure in the Law, he will be often thinking of it, as Chriſt ſaith, Mat. 6. 21. *Where the treaſure is, there the heart will be alſo.* If the Word of God be thy treaſure, thou wilt meditate on it, *Cogitationes crebræ longæ & profundæ.* Thou wilt frequently think of it; and when thou beginneſt to think of it, thou wilt dwell upon the thought of it, as a Bee dwells (as it were) upon the flower, to ſuck out the ſweetneſs that is in it; and thou wilt think of it with deep and ſerious meditations and contemplations; thou wilt *dive* into the unſearchable

riches and treasures that are in the Word. And as thou wilt meditate on it, so thou wilt be often, and unwearisom in reading and perusing of it, and discoursing about it. A man that delights in hunting, is never weary of talking o hunting; and he that delights in the world, of speaking about the world; and if you delight in Gods Word, you would be very frequent and indefatigable in discoursing of it.

2. If you delight in the *Word of God*, you would delight in the *Ministers* and *Ambassadors* of the Word, lawfully commissionated by Christ: For the great work o the Ministry is to expound and apply the Word; and therefore if you disrespect the godly, learned, lawful Ministry of the word, you take no *delight* in the word.

3. They that delight in the Word, will be at any cost to bring the Word to their Congregations, they will part with thousands of gold and silver, rather then with the Word; *He that esteems the word above thousands, will be willing to part with hundreds for the Words sake*: He will account

account a famine of the Word more bitter then a famine of bread; by how much the ſoul is better than the body, by ſo much will he be more troubled for a ſoul-famine, than a bodily.

4 He that delights truly in the Law, will ſincerely labour to obey it, and be much grieved when it is diſobeyed.

1 He will ſincerely labour to obey it; he will make the Word of God the man of his Counſel, *verſ.* 25. *Thy Teſtimonies are my delight*; but how doth he prove that? In the following words, *and my Counſellors*: He will make the Word a *Lamp to his feet, and a light to his paths*, ver. 105. In all his undertakings, he will enquire what God would have him to do, and he will make Gods Word his Compaſs to ſail by; and pray with *David*, ver. 35. *Make me to go in the path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight.*

2 He will be much grieved when others tranſgreſs the Law of God. Thus *David*, ver. 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, becauſe of the*

wicked that forsake thy Law. And verse 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy Law.*

And therefore you that delight in sin, you cannot be said to delight in the Word; and you that are not pained and grieved when others sin, you are not amongst the Number of those that take pleasure in Gods Law, or in whom God takes pleasure.

Use 2. Let us make it appear that we are *Saints in deed, and in truth*, not only Saints in *Mens*, but in *Gods Kalendar*, by following the example of holy *David*, set down in the Text. Let us make the Law of God our joyes, and our delights. Let me speak to you in the words of the Apostle, *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the Word of God dwell richly in you, &c.* not only *with you*, but *in you*. And in the words of Christ, John 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for therein you hope to find eternal life.* The *Greek* word signifieth to search, as men do under ground for treasures, or to search as men who dive under water for something

that

that is at the bottom. Let us with Job 23. 12. *Esteem the word of God above our necessary food.* Let us *love it above gold, yea above fine gold*; Let it be *dearer to us than thousands of gold and silver, sweeter then the honey and the honey-comb.*

You that are Gentlemen, remember what *Hierom* reports of *Nepotianus*, a young Gentleman of *Rome*, *Qui longa & assidua meditatione scripturarum, pectus suum fecerat bibliothecam Christi*, who by often and assiduous meditation of the Scriptures, made his Breast the Library of Christ. Remember what is said of King *Alphonsus*, that he read over the Bible fourteen times, together with such commentaries as those times afforded.

You that are Scholars, remember *Cranmer* and *Ridley*; the former learnt the New Testament by heart in his journey to *Rome*, the later, in *Pembroke-Hall* Walks in *Cambridge*. Remember what is said of *Thomas-a-Kempis*, that he found rest no where, *nisi in angulo cum libello*, but in a corner with this Book in his hand. And what is said of *Beza*,

that when he was above fourscore years old, he could say perfectly by heart any Greek Chapter in *Pauls* Epistles.

You that are Women, consider what *Hierom* saith of *Paula*, *Eustochiam*, and other Ladies, who were singularly versed in the Holy Scriptures.

Let all men consider that hyperbolical speech of *Luther*, *That he would not live in Paradise without the Word; and with it, he could live well enough in Hell.* This speech of *Luthers*, must be understood, *Cum grano salis.*

Quest. *May not a wicked man delight in the word of God?* *Is it not said of Herod*, Mark 6. 20. *That he heard* John Baptist *gladly? and of the stony ground*, Luke 8. 13. *That it received the word with joy? Is it not said of the Israelites remaining wicked, that they* delighted to know Gods ways, and took delight in approaching to God? *Isa.* 58. 2. *And of the Jews*, *Joh.* 5. 35. *That they were willing* for a season to rejoyce in the Light, *held forth by the preaching of* John Baptist?

And

Answ. There is a wide and vast difference between the joy and delight which a true Saint takes in Gods Word, and that which may be found in an hypocrite.

1 The delight of a godly man, is *orderly and seasonable*; it is the consequent of conviction and humiliation: For though Joy be the great work of the Spirit, yet it is not the first work. First, the Spirit by the Word convinceth and humbleth, and then comforteth, therefore Christ saith, *Mat.* 5.4. *Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted*; and *David* saith, *Ps.* 126.5. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* But the joy of an hypocrite is *unseasonable and disorderly*; it is the first work. It is said of the stony ground, that when *they heard the word, they received it immediately with gladness*, Mar. 4.16. It is not said, they received it first with sorrow, and then with gladness. Here is mention of joy, without any antecedent humiliation. Nay, the Text saith expresly, Luke 8.6. *It lacked moisture*, and therefore it withered away. There are many

Profeſſors in our days, that skip from ſin to joy at firſt, that all in an inſtant are in the higheſt form of ſin, and in the higheſt form of comfort; that skip out of the lap of the Devil, into the lap of joy: Theſe are as the ſtony ground. Theſe are wanton Chriſtians; they ſow before they plow; they know not the bitterneſs of ſin, and therefore in time of temptation fall away.

2 The delight that a godly man takes in the Word, is a well rooted delight. It is rooted in an *humble, good, and honeſt heart*; as it is ſaid of the good ground, *Luke* 8. 15. But the delight of an Hypocrite is *ſhallow and ſuperficial*, as his graces are ſleight and formal, ſo are his delights. Therefore it is ſaid of the ſeed that fell upon the ſtony ground, that it had *no root*, Luke. 8. 13. and *Matth.* 13. 5. *It wanted depth of earth*, and therefore when the Sun aroſe it was ſcorched. The Apoſtle hints, *Heb.* 6. 4. *And have taſted the good Word of God.* The delight of a wicked man in the Word, is but a *taſting and ſpewing*, no *feeding*; a floating aloft in the

the River of Christs blood, no diving down to the bottom. A man may taste a thing, and not like it, taste, and *like it*, and yet not come up to the price of it, as the *young man*, Matth. 19. 22. He was very desirous to enjoy eternal life, but he would not part with his possessions for the obtaining of it. A Cook tasteth of the Meat he dresseth, but they only that are invited eat of it.

Tasting doth not imply *habitual grace*. A man may taste that which he never digesteth, nor concocteth. The *Israelites* tasted of the first fruits of the Land of *Canaan*, and yet did not enter into *Canaan*. Such is the joy of the Hypocrite: It is *outward and superficial*, but the delight of a true Saint, is *inward, solid and substantial*. *Jeremiah* saith, that the Word of God was the joy *and rejoycing of his heart*, and that he did eat it, Jer. 15. 16. He did not only taste it, but eat it. And *Paul* saith, *Rom.* 7. 22. *I delight in the Law of God after the inner man*: His delights had depth of earth,

they were well digested and concocted.

3 It is *superlative and over-topping.* A godly man delighteth more in God and his Word, than in any worldly thing whatsoever; *Lord, lift thou up* (saith *David*, Psal. 4. 6, 7.) *the light of thy countenance upon us: thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn, and their wine increased.* So also, Psal. 43. 4. *Unto God my exceeding joy.* Psal. 137. 6. *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* And Psal. 119. 72. 127. The delight of a Saint in Gods Word *overtoppeth* all his creature-delights and enjoyments, and for the joy he finds in it, *he will sell all that he hath to purchase it.* Mat. 13. 44. But the joy of a wicked man is of an *inferior nature*, he rejoyceth more in Corn, Wine, and Oyl, *&c.* And when it comes into competition, he will leave his spiritual and heavenly, rather than lose his creature and carnal pleasures. Thus *Herod* rejoyced in the word that *John Baptist* preached, but he rejoyced more in his *Herodias*; and when it came to the tryal, he chose to [illegible]

head *John Baptist*, rather than to part with *Herodias*.

The stony ground, when persecution arose, parted with all its joy and faith, rather than it would lose its estate, or life. As a Godly man *rejoyceth in worldly things, as though he rejoyceth not*, 1 Cor. 7. 30, 31. So a wicked man *rejoyceth in spiritual things, as though he rejoyced not*. In the Old Law those Fowls that did both fly and swim, were unclean. A wicked man would many times *fly aloft in spiritual delights*, but he would also *bath himself*, and *swim* in carnal pleasures; and his heart is more affected with worldly advancement, and bodily recreations, than with heavenly; and this is a sign that he is an *unclean Christian*; and that his delights in God, and his VVord, are not right, because they are not *over-topping and superlative*.

4 It is *powerful and soul-strengthning*, full of life, vigour, and activity; it will enable the soul to do and suffer any thing for God, it turns a *Prison* into a *Paradise*, it

makes

The Saints delight in the Word,

makes *Martyrdom* to be as a *bed of Roses*; it is *Armour of Proof* to steel us, and make us fit to endure afflictions, both for God, and from God; Therefore *David* saith in the Text, *Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.* His delight in the Law supported him from sinking. It is like *Oyl* to the *Wheels*, like *Sails* to the *Ship*, and *Wings* to the *bird*; but the delight that a wicked man hath in the Word, is a *powerless*, *dead*, *fruitless* and *strengthless* delight; it is as a *paper Helmet*, and a *Painted Fire*; it will not support him in the hour of adversity. The persons represented by the stony ground, fell away, notwithstanding their joy, as soon as ever persecution arose for the Gospel. But the joy of a true Saint is *Soul-supporting*, and *soul-upholding*. *The joy in the Lord is their strength*, Nehem. 8. 10.

5 The delight that a godly man hath in the Word, is *sin-excluding*; it cannot consist with a delight in any sin; therefore *David* saith, *Psal.* 119. 11. *Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Sin

Sin is as a *wooden window*, to shut out the true joyes of the Spirit. But now a wicked man, though he may delight in the Word, yet he also delights in sinning *against the Word*. Although *Herod* heard *John Baptist* gladly, yet he kept his *Herodias*; and though the *Israelites* delighted to *know Gods ways*, yet they did not *delight to walk in his ways*. They were as a *Nation* that did righteousnes; he doth not say, they were such, but *quasi gens, &c.* as a Nation that did righteousnes. And though they delighted *to approach to God*, yet they did not delight to *obey* that God before whom they approached; they took pleasure in sinning against God, as well as in serving of God, *Isa.* 58. It was not a *sin-excluding* joy, and therefore it was false and counterfeit.

6 It is *Grace-encreasing*. The more a Saint delights in the *Word of God*, the more careful he will be to obey the *Will of God*, and to grow and increase in the *Grace of God*; therefore *David* saith, *Psal.* 119. 167. *My soul hath kept thy testimonies,*

for

for I love them exceedingly. And *Psal.* 40. 8. *I delight to do thy Will, O my God, yea thy Law is within my heart.* Because the Law was written in his heart, therefore he delighted to do it. He that delights to keep Gods Law, God will give him more grace to keep it, according to that remarkable text, *Psal.* 119. 55, 56. *I have remembred thy Name, O Lord, and have kept thy Law; this I had, because I have kept thy Precepts.* What had *David* for keeping Gods Precepts? He had power to keep his Law; that is, to grow and increase in keeping of it. As the Prophet, *Hos.* 6. 3. speaks of the knowledg of God; *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*; that is, if we industriously labour to know God, we shall have this reward, to be made able to know him more. So may I say of the Grace of God; *He that delights to keep Gods Law, shall have this reward, to be enabled to keep it more perfectly.*

A true delight in Gods Word is *Grace increasing.* Grace is the *Mother* of all true joy; *Isa.* 32. 17. and joy is as the *Daughter*, and the Mother &

Daugh-

daughter live and die together. True spiritual delight ebbs and flows as grace ebbs and flows. As the wood is to the fire, oyl to the flame, the shadow to the Body, so is joy to grace. *Quantum crescis in gratia, tantum dilataris in fiducia.* But now a wicked man, though he may have a kind of delight in Gods Word, yet it is not a delight of the right kind; it doth not argue that he hath true grace in him.

An Hypocrite is *all* joy and *no grace*; A *Gyant* in joy, and not so much as a *Dwarf* in Grace; like a green bough tyed to a dead tree. He is in the *highest form* of joy, and not so much as in the *lowest form* of grace.

7 The delight that a godly man hath in the Word, is not only a delight in *spiritual things*, but a *spiritual delight*, grounded upon spiritual aims and reasons. But the delight of a wicked man, though it be in spiritual things, yet it is but a *natural delight*. As a godly man *spiritualizeth carnal things*; so an ungodly man *carnalizeth spiritual things*.

things. *Auſtin* before his converſion rejoyced much to hear *Ambroſe* preach, but it was becauſe of his eloquence (as he ſaith) not upon a ſpiritual account. A wicked man may follow a Preacher, and delight in his preaching, becauſe of his elegant words, and Rhetorical expreſſions, becauſe *he is unto him as a very lovely ſong of one that hath a pleaſant voice*, &c. as it is *Ezek.* 33. 32. Or out of *novelty*, becauſe newly come (as the *Iſraelites* delighted in *Manna* at firſt, but afterwards loathed it) or becauſe he *loves his perſon*; or out of a deſire to obtain a form of knowledg in heavenly things The Phariſees delighted to do many ſpiritual things out of *vain-glory*. *Jehu* delighted to do the will of God, but it was for his own ends *Pauci quærunt Jeſum, propter Jeſum*. *Stella* is of opinion, that the Devil perſwaded *Herod to hear* John Baptiſt *gladly; and to reverence him, and to do many things*, that ſo he might hold him the faſter in his poſſeſſion. The Devil had him ſure by one ſin, and therefore he provoked him to do ſome good things, that ſo

he

he might rock him asleep in presumption; and by his good things he might quiet his conscience, and put a fair glos upon his incestuous practices: A man may rejoyce in spiritual things upon sinful grounds and reasons. But now a true Saint *delights* in the *word* upon a *spiritual account*, because it is *Gods Word*, and God would have him *delight in it*; because it is his *guide to glory*, the way by which he is sanctified. It is both *concha & canalis*, A *Cistern* to contain the glorious *Mysteries of Salvation*, and a *Conduit* to convey God and grace into his soul.

In a word, he delights in it, because it is holy and pure; he can say with *David*, Psal. 119. 140. *Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.* This no wicked man can truly say.

8 The delight that a godly man takes in the Word, is without any *reservation* or *distinction*. He delights in the *whole Word of God*, in the *commanding*, and *threatning* words, as well as in the *promising* words; he beholds God, and his *wisdom*, and

goods

goodneſs in every verſe, and therefore he can ſay with *Hezekiah*, Iſa. 39. 8. *Good is the Word of the Lord*. He hath the *whole Law* written in his heart, and rejoyceth in every *title of it*. But a wicked man hath his *reſervations & diſtinctions*, he may delight in the *promiſing* word, but he undervalues the *commanding* word, and turneth a deaf ear to the *threatning* word. It is ſaid of the *Jews*, that *they rejoyced in the light of John Baptiſt*, but it is not ſaid, They *rejoyced in his heat*: He was a burning and a ſhining light; they rejoyced in his ſhining, but not in his burning. It is hardly poſſible for a wicked man remaining wicked, to rejoyce in the *burning zeal, holineſs* and *ſtrictneſs* of a *John Baptiſt*. But a godly man delighteth both in the *light* and *heat* of the word.

9 It is an *abiding delight*; 2 Theſ. 2. 16. *Everlaſting conſolation*, John 16. 22. *Your joy no man taketh from you*. It is as a *fixed Star*. But the delight of a wicked man in the word, is as the *crackling of Thorns* upon the fire, and as the Corn that grew on

the

the stony ground, which quickly sprung up, and as quickly withered, *Joh.* 27. 8. Therefore it is said of the Jews, *Joh.* 5. 3. They rejoyced in his light for a *season*. In the *Greek* it is, πρὸς ὥραν, for an hour. A wicked mans delight in the Word, is but as a *Blazing-Star*, which is quickly extinguished. He may rejoyce in the Word while he is hearing of it, but it quickly vanisheth away. He is like to a man that comes into a pleasant Garden, and is delighted with the smell of it while he is there; But a Child of God makes a *Posie of these Flowers*, to refresh him when he is out. He delights to read, and to keep the *Law of God continually, for ever and ever*, Psal. 119. 45.

Let us (I beseech you) labour, with all labour, for this *superlative, well-rooted, powerful, spiritual, sin-excluding, grace-increasing, and 4-biding delight*, in the whole Word of God.

Quest. *What must we do, that we may be inabled thus to make the Law of God our Delights?*

Answ. 1. You must seriously study the

the *Excellency of Gods Word*; this made *David* prize it so much, and love it so much, *Psal.* 19, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The Word of God hath God for its Author, and therefore must needs be full of infinite Wisdom and Eloquence, even the Wisdom and Eloquence of God. There is not a word in it, but breathes out God, and it breathed out by God. It is (as *Irenæus* saith) κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας, an invariable rule of Faith, an unerring and infallible guide to heaven. It contains glorious Revelations and discoveries, no where else to be found. It hath a *manifesting, convincing, soul-humbling, soul-directing, soul-converting*, and *soul-comforting* power and efficacy in it, as appears by these Scriptures, *Heb.* 4. 12. 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. 1 *Kings* 21. 29. *Psalm* 119. 105. 2 *Cor.* 3. 16. *Psalm* 119. 50. And therefore to delight in the Word, and the God that made it, is not only our Duty, *Psalm* 37. 4. But it is Recorded in Scripture as our Priviledge, and as the great Reward that God would bestow upon those that keep

holy

holy the Sabbath-day, *Isa.* 58. 13, 14. *Then thou shalt delight thy self in the Lord.* This shall be thy great Reward.

2. You must fixedly ponder the necessity of practising this duty: For if you delight in *Gods Law*, God will *delight* in you. If the Law be your beloved, you are Gods beloved; If you take no *pleasure* in his Word, his soul will take no *pleasure* in you.

3. You must pray for the grace of *Illumination*. Whensoever you take the Bible in your hand to read in it, pray *Davids* Prayer, *Psalm.* 119. 18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law.* Philosophers observe, that *Lumen est vehiculum Influentiæ*: Light is the Chariot of Influence; as it begets the Flower in the Field, the Gold in the Mineral; so the Foundation of all Regeneration, is *Illumination*. Pray that God would open your eyes that you may understand the Scriptures, as he did to his Apostles, *Luke* 24. 45.

45. That he would take away the Vail that is upon your hearts.

4 Pray that he that made you Creatures, would make you new Creatures, that as *new born Babes*, you may desire the sincere Milk of the Word.

5. Pray that God would fulfil that excellent promise, *Jer.* 31. 33. That he would put his *Law* in your *inward parts*, and write it in your hearts, and then you cannot but heartily delight in it.

6 Pray to God to give you the same Spirit that wrote the Word, to enable you to delight in it.

7 Pray for a *Spiritual palate*, that you may not only delight in *spiritual things*, but have a *spiritual delight in spiritual things*. It is said of the Lioness, that when she had once tasted of the sweetness of mans flesh, she is never satisfied till she hath more of it. He that hath tasted of the good Word of God, and not only tasted, but eaten it, and digested it into good nourishment, he will not only delight in it, but he will delight in it above Gold, yea, above fine Gold,

Gold, and he will never be satisfied, till he be filled with the fulness of that God that made it.

The end of the second Sermon.

THE Excellency and Usefulness OF THE WORD.

SERMON III.

Psa l. 119. 92

Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction.

NOW I come to speak of the Proposition that is clearly held forth in the Text.

Doct. 3. *That the Word of God delighted in, is the afflicted Saints Antidote against ruine and destruction. Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should, &c.* The Word of God is the sick Saints Salve, the dying Saints Cordial, a most precious me-

dicine

dicine to keep Gods people from periſhing in time of affliction: This upheld *Jacob* from ſinking, when his Brother *Eſau* came furiouſly marching to deſtroy him, *Gen.* 32. 12. *And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good*, &c. The Promiſe of God ſupported him. This alſo upheld *Joſhua*, and inabled him couragiouſly to fight the Lords battels, becauſe God had ſaid *He would never leave him, nor forſake him*, Joſh. 1. 5. *Melanethon* ſaith, that the *Lantgrave* of *Heſſen* told him at *Dreſda*, that it had been impoſſible for him to have born up under the manifold miſeries of ſo long an impriſonment, *Niſi habuiſſet conſolationem ex Verbo divino in ſuo corde*, but for the comforts of the Scriptures in his heart.

There are eight things may be ſaid (amongſt many other) in commendation of the Word of God.

1. It is the *Magazine* and *Store-houſe* of all comfort and conſolation. There is no condition (but one) that a man can be in, but he may find ſoul-ſupporting comfort for it out of the Word. Indeed

if thou reſolveſt to go on in ſin, the Word cannot comfort thee; it threatneth Hell and Damnation to all ſuch. If the God of Heaven can make ſuch miſerable, they ſhall be miſerable; But excepting this one, there is no condition ſo miſerable, but a man may fetch a Cordial out of the Word to ſupport him under it. Art thou as empty of riches, and as full of diſeaſes, as *Job* under the Old Teſtament, and *Lazarus* under the New Teſtament? are thy ſins (with which thou art willing to part) many and great? Is thy conſcience exceedingly wounded and diſquieted? Doth the Devil roar upon thee with hideous temptations? let thy condition be never ſo ſad, the Word of God is able to afford thee comfort under it. For it is the *Word of that God, who is the God of all Conſolation.* There is no kind of true comfort, but here it is to be had, here are Cordials of all ſorts; Comforts under bodily troubles, and comforts under ſoul-troubles. There is no Monarch can furniſh his Table with ſuch variety of delicates, as God hath furniſhed

nished his Word with variety of comforts.

2 The Word of God is not only the *Magazine* of all true comfort, but the *Fountain* from whence it is derived. All the comfort that you receive by reading of good Books, is fetched out of this Book. All the refreshings that the *Ambassadors of Christ* administer to you, are borrowed from this *Fountain*. As the King of *Israel* answered the woman (that cryed out, saying, *Help my Lord, O King*) *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* So will all the true Ministers of Christ say to any distressed soul that crys out for comfort: How can we comfort you, if the Word of God doth not comfort you? all our comforts must be fetcht from thence. 2 King. 6. 26, 27.

3 It will comfort us at such a time, when no outward thing can comfort us; and that is, when we are under soul-agonies, and when our soul sits upon our lips, ready to depart; when we are falling into the Ocean of Eternity, then even then, the promises of the word will comfort us when

Gold and Silver, Father and Mother, Friends and Physicians, are miserable comforters, then will one Promise out of the Word fill us full of joy unspeakable, and glorious.

4 *The comforts of the Word exceed all other Comforts, for they are pure, and purifying, sure and satisfying; they are soul-supporting, soul-comforting, and soul-ravishing, they are durable and everlasting.* The comforts of the world are not worthy to be named that day in which we speak of the comforts of the Word. They are not *consolationes*, but *consolatiunculæ*. At best they are but bodily, unsatisfying and transitory; many times they are sinful, and soul-damning.

5 The Word of God is not only a *Magazine* and a *Fountain* of comfort, but also a *Touchstone* by which we must try all our comforts whether they are true and real, or no. All joyes, hopes and assurances, must be tried by the Word, and if not rightly grounded thereupon, are false, and soul-delusion.

It is an *Apothecaries Shop*, or a *Physitians Dispensatory*, out of which we may fetch all manner of *Medicines*, to cure all the diseases of our souls. Art thou spiritually lame, blind, or dumb? *&c.* The Word will open blind eyes, make the dumb to speak, and the Lame to walk. If dead in sins and trespasses, the word, when it is the Sword of the Spirit, will quicken thee: It is as a Corrosive to eat sin out of thy heart, therefore *David* saith, *I have hid thy word in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

7 It is a *spiritual Armory*, out of which we may fetch all manner of weapons, to conquer the Devil and his temptations, 2 *Cor.* 10.4. It is that little Brook, out of which every *David* may fetch *five smooth stones* to destroy the Devil. These five smooth stones, are five Texts of Scripture, three of these Christ took out of the Brook of the Word, by which he subdued the Devil, *Matth.* 4.4, 7, 10.

8 It is the *Sun of the Christian World*. As the *Sun* is the *light* of the

Natural World, and without it the world is but a Chaos, and a Dungeon full of darkneſs. So is the *Word of God*, the light of the ſpiritual world, without which a Chriſtian is under an eternal night. Therefore *David* ſaith, *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*, Pſ. 119. 105. What would all the world avail, if no Sun to enlighten it? and what comfort would all the wealth of it afford us, if no word to inſtruct and councel us? For this is the Chriſtians Compaſs to ſail to Heaven by, his ſtaff to walk withal to Heaven, his Spiritual Bladders to keep his ſoul from drowning; the Cork, to keep up the net of his ſoul from ſinking. Afflictions are like the Lead of the Net, which weigheth it down; but the Word is as the Cork, which keeps it up, that it ſinks not. So ſaith *David* in the Text, *Unleſs thy Law had been my delights, &c.*

Uſe 2. If the Word of God be of ſuch invaluable excellency, abſolute neceſſity, and of ſuch admirable uſe.

Let

1 Let us bleſs God exceedingly for revealing his will unto us in the Word. It was a great honour and priviledg to the *Jews*, that to them *were committed the Oracles of God*, *Rom.* 3. 2. And it is our great happineſs, that we have not only the ſame Oracles of God which they have, but an addition of the New Teſtament, for the clearer diſcovery of the myſteries of ſalvation unto us. If God be to be praiſed for every crumb of bread we eat, much more for giving us his Word, which is the *bread of life*, and the only food of our ſouls. Bleſſed be God, who hath not only given us the Book of the Creatures, and the Book of Nature to know himſelf and his will by; but alſo, and eſpecially the book of the Scriptures, whereby we come to know thoſe things of God, and of Chriſt, which neither the book of Nature, nor of the Creatures can reveal unto us.

Let us bleſs God, not only for revealing his Will in his Word, but for revealing it by writing. Before the time of *Moſes*, God diſcovered

his Will by immediate Revelations from Heaven, But we have a surer word of Prophesie, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. surer (to us) than a voice from Heaven, for the Devil (saith the Apostle) *transforms himself into an Angel of light.* He hath his apparitions, and revelations; he is Gods Ape, and in imitation of God, he appears to his Disciples, and makes them believe that it is God that appears, and not the Devil. Thus he appeared to *Saul*, in the likeness of *Samuel*. And if God should now at this day discover his way of Worship, and his Divine Will by Revelations, how easily would men be deceived, and mistake Diabolical Delusions for Divine Revelations; and therefore let us bless God for the written Word, which is surer and safer (as to us) than an immediate Revelation. There are some that are apt to think that if an Angel should come from heaven, & reveal Gods Will to them, it would work more upon them, than the written Word; but I would have these men study the conference between *Abraham* and *Dives*, Luke

16

16. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. *Habent Mosen & Prophetas, &c. They have Moses and the Prophets*; if they will not profit by them, neither would they profit by any that should come out of Hell, or down from Heaven to them; for it is the same God that speaks by his written Word, and by a voice from Heaven. The difference is only in the outward cloathing; and therefore if Gods speaking by writing will not amend us, no more will Gods speaking by a voice. *O bless God exceedingly for the written Word!* Let us cleave close to it, and not expect any Revelations from Heaven of New Truths, but say with the Apostle, *Gal.* 1.8,9.

Use 2. *Let us prize the Word of God above Gold, yea, above fine Gold:* Let us read it diligently, reverently, praying to God to give us the same Spirit that wrote it, to enable us to understand it, and conscientiously to practise it. Let us make it the joy and rejoycing of our heart; and as it is in the Text, let us make it our *Delights*; but of this

I ſpeak in the former point. The only motive I ſhall now uſe to perſwade you to make the Word your *delights*, ſhall be this in the Text, becauſe it *will keep you from periſhing in the time of your greateſt affliction*; It will comfort you when you have moſt need of it, that is, under heart-ſinking afflictions, (and at the hour of death) and it will comfort you, when all outward comforts and creatures fail. It will be food to ſtrengthen your weak Faith. Phyſick to cure the remainders of corruptions, it will be a Cordial to revive your drooping Spirits, and fainting ſouls: It will make you more then Conquerors over all temptations and diſtreſſes.

Queſt. But now the great Queſtion is, *How a Child of God ought of manage and make uſe of the Word to God, ſo as to make it a Conduit of ſupport and comfort in the day of his greateſt Afflictions.*

Anſw. To be able to do this, there is a great deal of ſpiritual wiſdom and underſtanding required. For the Word to many people is like *Saul's*

Armor

Armor to *David*, which was so cumbersome to him, that he could not wear it.

There are many know not how to use the Word, so as to be comforted by it. As the Woman of *Samaria* told Christ, *Joh.* 4. 11. *The Well is deep and thou hast nothing to draw with.* So may I say, The Word of God is a deep Well, it is a Well of Salvation, but it is deep, and the deeper the sweeter, but most people want buckets to draw with, they want a spiritual art to fetch out of these Wells of Salvation, divine supportation, and consolation; and therefore to help you in this great work you must know. Isa. 41.

The Word of God divided into the Commanding, Threatning, and Promising Word.

That the Word of God may be divided into three parts; into *Commandments*, *Threatnings*, and *Promises*: And though a Christian must not neglect the Commanding and Threatning word yet, yet if ever he would make the Word a Channel of Divine Comfort, he must study the Promising Word, for the Promises are a Christians *Magna Charta* for Heaven. All com-

fort

fort muſt be built upon a Scripture-Promiſe, elſe it is Preſumption, not true comfort. The Promiſes are *pabulum fidei, & anima fidei*, the food of Faith, and the ſoul of Faith. As Faith is the life of a Chriſtian, ſo the Promiſes are the life of Faith; *Faith is a dead Faith*, if it hath no Promiſe to quicken it; As the Promiſes are of no uſe without Faith to apply them, ſo Faith is of no uſe without a Promiſe to lay hold on. And the great reaſon why the people of God walk uncomfortably in their afflictions, is, becauſe they do not chew the Promiſes; They are rare Cordials, but as a man cannot taſte the ſweetneſs of a Cordial, unleſs he chew it, no more can we receive any ſpiritual refreſhment from the Promiſes, unleſs we meditate on them. The Promiſes are as a Mine full of rich treaſure: but as Mines, unleſs we dig deep into them, we can never get the gold and ſilver hid in them, no more can we enjoy the ſoul raviſhing comfort of the Promiſes, unleſs we dig into them by a ſerious conſideration of them. They

are as a Garden full of rare Flowers, able to sweeten any condition: But because we do not walk in this Garden and pick out these Flowers, hence it is that we live so disconsolately, and dejectedly under our afflictions. There are many rare stories declaring the comfort that some of Gods Saints have received from the Promises in the day of their distress. Mr. *Bilney* that blessed Martyr was much wounded in Conscience, by reason of the great sin he committed in subscribing to the Popish errors, but he was much comforted by reading those words, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which I am the chief.* *Beza* was supported under his troubles by the words of Christ, *John* 10. 27, 28, 29. Mr. *Bolton* tells us of one that was upheld under great affliction, and comforted from *Isa.* 26. 3. Of another, from *Isa.* 57. 15. I knew a young Maid, that went triumphantly to Heaven, by the refreshing she found in that well known Text, *Mat.* 11. 28.

and

& many that have been wonderfully cheared by reading the Eighth of the *Romans*, and by that Text, 1 *John* 3. 14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren.* The truth is, there is no Promise, but if God be pleased to *illighten* it, and shew us our interest in it, will afford a harvest of joy. It is with Promises, as it is with Sermons: That Sermon which once heard, did not at all work upon us, the same Sermon heard at another time may exceedingly effect us. And the same Text of Scripture which sometimes doth not at all comfort us, may at another time convey much comfort to us. Two men troubled in Conscience may both of them read the same Chapter, and hear the same Sermon, and one of them may have his troubled mind pacified, and the other continue troubled; and the reason is, because the Spirit of God makes the Word *effectual to one, and not to the other.* How often hath a distressed Saint read *Mat.* 11. 28. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *John* 10. 27, 28. *Isa.* 26. 3. *Isa.* 57. 15. 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. and found

found no comfort in reading of them? But if the Spirit of God did come in, and open his eyes to behold the rich mercies wrapt up in these Promises, and his Interest in them, they would fill him with comfort above expression. And therefore if ever you would make the Word of God, Gods Instrument to conveigh, support and comfort to you in the time of soul-sinking afflictions, you must study the Promises, and pray unto God that his Spirit may irradiate them, and shew you the fulness of them, and your Interest in them.

Quest. *How must we improve the Promises, so as to make them Spiritual Bladders, to keep us from being drowned in the deep waters of affliction?*

Answ. You must do three things.

Three things to be done by those that would improve the Promises.

1. You must make a *Catalogue of the Promises.*

2 You must seriously *ponder and meditate on them.*

3 You must *apply* them to your own souls, as belonging to you in particular.

1 You must make a *Catalogue of the Promises*, you must gather them

them up, as they lie ſcattered in the Word, into a *ſpiritual Noſe-gay*; and bind them together: You muſt do as they that gather up ends of Gold and Silver, you muſt loſe none: Every Promiſe is as a Ray of Gold, as a Star in the Firmament. And though there are ſtars of divers magnitudes, differing from one another in glory, yet every ſtar hath its beauty and benefit: So though ſome Promiſes are more glorious then others, (like the Sun in compariſon of the Moon) yet every Promiſe hath its beauty and luſtre: and as Star-light in a dark night is very comfortable, ſo in the dark night of affliction every little Promiſe will afford unſpeakable comfort to a troubled ſoul.

To help you in making this Catalogue, give me leave to ſuggeſt three things.

1 Be ſure to make it in time of health. Wo be to thoſe that have their Promiſes to gather, when they ſhould make uſe of them, *You that ſlight the Promiſes in proſperity, ſhall receive no comfort from them in adverſity.*

2 Forget not to treaſure up all thoſe Promiſes which God hath made to his children, in the day of their adverſity: As for Example, God hath promiſed in *all our afflictions to be with us*, Iſa. 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee*, &c. He will be with you, to protect and direct you, to ſupport and comfort you. *If three Saints be put into the Fiery Furnace, the Son of God will make the fourth*, Dan. 3.25.

2 God will be afflicted in all our afflictions, *Iſaiah*. 63. 9. He ſuffers in all our ſufferings, *Acts* 9.4.

3 He will make our *Beds in our ſickneſs*, Pſal. 41. 2. He will condeſcend to the loweſt office for our eaſe and refreſhment.

4 He will *know our ſouls in adverſity*, Pſal. 31. 7. He will know us to pity us, and to ſuccour, and to help us.

5 He will keep us from the evil of all afflictions. *Job*. 5. 19. God hath not promiſed to keep his people from

afflictions.

afflictions, but to keep them from the hurt of them. Though they are not good in themſelves, yet he will turn them to our good, *Heb.* 12. 10. 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. *Jer.* 24. 5. The good Figs were carried into captivity for their good. God hath promiſed that all *things ſhall work together for our good*, Rom. 8. 28. not only all Ordinances, &c. but all afflictions, &c.

6 God hath promiſed to *lay no more upon us, then we are able to bear*, but either to give us leſs pain, or greater patience, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *And though in a little wrath he hid his face from us for a moment, yet with everlaſting kindneſs will he have mercy on us*, &c. Iſa. 54. 7, 8. Theſe, and many ſuch like Promiſes, will be as ſo many ſpiritual Cordials to revive our fainting ſpirits, and as ſo many Pillars to uphold us under the greateſt affliction.

3 For the compleating of this *Catalogue*, you may make uſe of many excellent Books written for this purpoſe, wherein you ſhall have Promiſes of all kinds, both ſpiritual and temporal, gathered together: Yet let me adviſe you not to reſt ſatisfied

with

with the collections of others, but when you read the Bible, and meet with a ſuitable Promiſe, with which God is pleaſed to affect your hearts, take the pains to write it down, and one ſuch Promiſe of your own writing, will work more powerfully upon your ſouls, than many others of anothers gathering. So much for the firſt, *viz. Make a Catalogue of the Promiſes.*

Mr. Lee on the Promiſes, Mr. Ball. Mr. Bulkley.

The end of the third Sermon.

THE

AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

READER,

THis and the following Sermon contains a large Discourse about the Promises, which because it may be thought by some to be impertinent to the Text, and rather a Digression from it, than an explication of it; I crave leave to inform thee of two things.

1 That the Promises are the Principal ground of Comfort to a Child of God, in a day of his Adversity; They are his chief City of Refuge, when all Creature-comforts fail; when he suffers Shipwrack of all humane props, these are his Planks upon which he swims safe to the shore of Heaven. All Comfort that is not founded upon a Promise, is Delusion, not true Consolation. And therefore a discourse about them,

them, cannot rationally be interpreted Eccentrical to the Text.

2. That there are divers particulars added to these Sermons, concerning the Nature, Necessity, Excellency, and Usefulness of the Promises, which were not mentioned in the preaching of them. And if any of them shall appear to be Heterogenial to the Text; yet if they prove serviceable to heighten the esteem of the Promises, and to quicken thee to a more serious & frequent Meditation on them, & Application of them, I hope thou art not at all injured; And I may justly desire, that thou wouldst not be offended.

It is reported of St. Austin (in his life written by Possidius) that by a digression (in one of his Sermons) from his Text, he converted an Heretick from his erronious Opinion. If any passage in these two Sermons prove useful to turn thee from thy sinful Negligence, and to awaken thee to a more diligent study of the precious promises, I shall account it a happy and blessed Digression; For herein especially consisteth the difference between a Religious Christian, and a Moral Man. A Moral Man will abstain from the outward acts of sin; But he knows not what it is to live upon promises;

miſes; *He never taſted any ſweetneſs in a Promiſe; He lives upon* Creatures, *not upon* Promiſes; *and therefore when* Creatures fail, *his heart* ſinks like a ſtone, *and he is at his* Wits end, *and* Faiths end. *But a* Religious Chriſtian *lives upon* promiſes, *and not upon* creatures; *and therefore when* Creatures fail, *he hath the* promiſes *to live on*; *He labours to taſte the ſweetneſs that is in them. He lives upon* promiſes, *when* Providence *ſeems to run croſs to* promiſes. *They are his* fiery Chariot, *to carry him up to Heaven. If then theſe enſuing* Sermons, *inflame thy affections with a greater love to the Promiſes, and a greater care to* meditate *on them, and to get an* intereſt *in them, thou haſt cauſe to bleſs God, and to pray for*

Thy unworthy Servant
in Chriſt,

EDM. CALAMY.

MEDI-

MEDITATE ON THE PROMISES.

SERMON IV.

Pſal. 119. 22.

Unleſs thy Law had been my delights, I ſhould then have periſhed in mine afflictions.

HE that would improve the *Promiſes*, ſo as to make them ſpiritual *Bladders*, to keep him from being *drowned* in the *deep waters of affliction*, muſt not only make a *Catalogue* of the *Promiſes*, but he muſt alſo,

2 Fixedly, and ſeriouſly *meditate* on them; firſt, he muſt treaſure up theſe Jewels in his heart, and then unlock them by *meditation*; firſt, he muſt make his *Noſe-gay*, and then ſmell

We muſt not only make a Catalogue of the Promiſes, but meditate on them.

ſmell of it. The word of God (as I have ſaid) is as a Garden full of excellent *Promiſes*, as ſo many choice flowers; and it is our duty to walk often in this Garden, to gather up all the flowers that lie ſcattered in it, into ſeveral Noſe-gayes, to bind them together (if I may ſo ſpeak) with the thread of Faith, and then every day to ſmell of them. The *Promiſes* are the *Saints Legacies* left them by Chriſt in his laſt *Will* and *Teſtament*. The Saints are called the *Heirs of the Promiſes*, Heb. 6. 17. And if they would be filled full of joy in the day of their diſtreſs, they muſt be frequent in reading theſe Legacies: The Promiſes are (as it were) the *Breaſts* of *God*, full of the *Milk of grace & comfort*; and it is our duty to be ſucking out (by meditation) the Milk of grace and comfort contained in them. That which the Prophet ſaith of the Church of Chriſt, may as truly be ſaid of the Promiſes of Chriſt. *Rejoyce O ye people of God, and be glad all ye that have an intereſt in the Promiſes: Rejoyce for joy, all ye that are mourners in Sion, that ye may ſuck of*

be

be satisfied with the breath of their consolations, that you may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of joy and comfort contained in them. The promises are the Saints *Aqua vitæ* (as one calls them) the Saints Cordials, the Saints Planks to swim to Heaven upon, the Saints Fiery Chariot to carry them up to Heaven? And the great reason why they walk so uncomfortably, so disconsolately, and so unbelievingly, in the time of their tribulation, is because they do not smell of these *Nose-gays*, they do not chew these Cordials, they do not read over these spiritual Legacies, they do not by serious meditation and consideration, suck out the comfort comprehended in them. For as fire will not warm us unless we tarry at it, and as a *Bee* cannot suck out the Honey that is in a Flower, unless she abide upon it; no more can a child of God receive supportation and consolation from the Promises in the hour of temptation, unless he seriously and solemnly ponder and meditate on them.

There is a double difference between a *profitable* [illegible]

poor, humble, distressed Child of God.

The difference between a presumptuous sinner, and a true child of God in relation to the Promises.

1 A *presumptuous sinner* studieth nothing but the Promising Word: He slights the *commanding*, and the *threatning Word*. The Word commands him to keep holy the Sabbath day, not to love the world, nor to lust, but he turns a deaf ear to it. The Word threatneth to *wound the hairy scalp of every one that goeth on in his wickedness*; but because God is patient and long suffering, therefore he regards it not. But as for the Promising word, he snatcheth at it, he doth not truly lay hold on it, but snatcheth at it, before it belongs to him, and Spider-like, sucks the poyson of sin out of it, and makes of it a Cradle to rock himself asleep in sinful courses. Because God hath promised, *That whensoever a sinner turns from his sins which he hath committed, he shall surely live, & not die*, therefore he delayes, and prorogues his turning from sin.

But now a *poor, distressed, humble Christian*, falls on the contrary part, he ... upon the *commanding and threatning Word*, but never ponders the promising

mising Word. God (saith he) commands *me to love him with all my heart and soul, to wash my heart from iniquity, to love my enemies, to cut off my right hand, and to pluck out my right eye*, &c. But I cannot perform these commands, therefore surely I shall never be saved. God (saith he) hath threatned to *curse everyone that continueth not in every thing that is written in his law to do it*, and therefore surely I am accursed. But he never studies nor ponders the promising Word, for if he did, he would quickly *know three things* for his everlasting comfort.

Three observable things about the promises.

1 That *there is nothing required by God in his Word as our duty, but God hath either promised to bestow it upon us as his gift, or the Saints have prayed to God for it as his gift*. God commands us to love him, but he hath promised to *circumcise our hearts to love him*, &c. Deut. 30. 6. God commands us to *fear him*, to *turn our selves* from our transgressions, and to *make our selves a new heart, and a new spirit*. But he hath promised to *give us a new heart, and a new spirit, to put his fear in our hearts that we shall never depart from him*,

Ezek. 18. 31.
Ezek. 36. 26.
Jer. 32. 40.
Mic. 7. 19.
Ro. 6. 14.

and to *turn us from our evil ways*. The Saints of God alſo have prayed unto God for this, as the fruit of his free mercy, Jer. 31. 18. *Lam.* 5. 21. There is nothing commanded in the Covenant of works, but God hath promiſed it in the Covenant of grace, in
Iſa. 26. 12. ſome meaſure to work it in us, for
Jer. 31 33 he hath promiſed to *work all our works*
Ex. 63. 27. *in us*, and to *write his Law* (not one Commandment of it only, but the whole Law) *in our hearts, and to put it in our inward parts*, and to *cauſe us to walk in his ways*.

2 *That God under the Covenant of Grace, will for Chriſts ſake accept of leſs than he requires in the Covenant of works.* He requires perfection of degrees, but he will accept of perfection of parts; he requires us to live without ſin, but he will accept of our ſincere endeavours to do it. *If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor 8. 12.

3 *That though he cannot in his own perſon perform all that God commands, yet Jeſus Chriſt, as his Surety, and in his*

his ſtead hath fulfilled the Law for him, and that God will accept of Chriſts perfect, as a cover for his imperfect righteouſneſs. That Chriſt hath redeemed him from the curſe of the Law, being made a curſe for him. That the Threatnings of the Law are Serpents without a ſting, and that Chriſt hath taken away the power and force of them.

Did a *broken-hearted*, and *wounded ſinner* ponder and meditate on theſe things, they would fill him full of joy and comfort; He would flie from the Covenant of Works to the Covenant of Grace; from his own unrighteouſneſs, unto the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and from the *commanding* and *threatning word* unto the *promiſing word*; he would ſay, Lord, Thou commandeſt me to walk in thy Statutes, and to keep thy Laws; This I cannot do of my ſelf, but thou haſt promiſed *to cauſe me to walk in thy ways*, and to *write thy Law in my heart*. Lord give me power to do what thou commandeſt, and then command what thou wilt. Domine da quod jubes, & jube quod vis. *Auſt.*

2 A *preſumptuous Sinner* is always Second difference

ways ſtudying the promiſing Word, to bolſter up himſelf in ſin, but he never ſtudies his *ſins and iniquities, to repent for them, and from them.* He meditates on the promiſes to harden his heart in ſin, but not at all on his ſins to humble himſelf for them, and to turn from them.

But now on the contrary, *A poor diſtreſſed Chriſtian* pores upon his *iniquities and corruptions*, but never minds himſelf of the *Promiſes*; and this makes him live ſo dejectedly, and diſconſolately. A wicked man ſtudieth his Corruptions too little; A diſtreſſed Chriſtian too much. If he did ſtudy the Promiſes, as much as he doth his corruptions, he would not walk ſo uncomfortably.

Wherefore if ever you would make the *Word of God a Conduit of Comfort* in the day of your diſtreſs; you muſt not only meditate on the *commanding* and *threatning word*, but on the *promiſing word*. The commandments and threatnings muſt drive you to the promiſes; you muſt not only ſtudy your corruptions to humble you, but alſo the promiſes to comfort you. I do not ſay

say you must not study your corruptions, but you must joyn the study of the Promises together with them. If *Abraham* had minded only the deadness of *Sarahs* womb, and of his own body, he had never believed, *&c.* but he was strong in faith, and staggered not, because *he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, nor the deadness of* Sarahs *womb, but was fully perswaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform.* If *Sarah* had considered only that she was past age, she would never have believed that she should have a child; but she eyed the Promise, *and judged him faithful, who had promised,* and that made her believe. If a Saint of God looks only downwards upon the deadness of his heart, and meditates only upon his sins and infirmities, he will never be comforted in the day of his distress. But he must also look upwards unto the Promises, seriously ponder, and fixedly study them; which will be as strong pillars to support him, and keep him from falling into despair, in the hour of tribulation. Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21. Heb. 11. 11.

Meditate on

Queſt. *What are the* Meditations *which we muſt have in reference and relation to the Promiſes in the day of our diſtreſs?*

Anſw. I will rank them into nine particulars.

1 You muſt meditate upon the three great truths already mentioned.

The firſt meditation about the Promiſes.

1 That God commands nothing as our duty, which he hath not promiſed, as his gift.

2 That God in the Covenant of Grace, will accept of leſs then he requires in the Covenant of works.

3 That if we truly believe in Chriſt, God will accept of his righteouſneſs, as a ſatisfaction for our unrighteouſneſs.

The ſecond meditation meditate on the preciouſneſs of the Promiſes. 2 Pet. 1.4.

2 You muſt meditate upon the excellency and preciouſneſs of the Promiſes, they are called τιμια και μεγιστα επαγγελματα *exceeding great and precious Promiſes*; They are precious in five reſpects.

The Promiſes are precious in five reſpects;

1 Becauſe they *coſt a great price* (even the blood of Chriſt) *to purchaſe them.* They are all made to us *in Chriſt*, and *for Chriſt*; they are

in him, yea, and in him, *Amen*. The Covenant, (which is the Pandecta and Cabinet of all the Promiſes) was ſeal'd with his blood, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

1 Becauſe they *aſſure us of great and precious things*; they aſſure us of our *Intereſt in God*, of our *Juſtification*, *Reconciliation*, *Adoption*, *Sanctification* and *Glorification*: Heaven it ſelf is nothing elſe but the *enjoyment of the Promiſes*, Heb. 6. 12. The Promiſes are Heaven folded up; Heaven is the Promiſe unfolded. For the Promiſes are nothing elſe, but the *eternal purpoſes of God towards his Children made manifeſt*. The Purpoſes of God are his concealed Promiſes; and the Promiſes are his Revealed Purpoſes. The Promiſes are the kiſſes of Jeſus Chriſt, they diſcover his dear love; and when he diſcovers to us our intereſt in them, then he *kiſſes us with the kiſſes of his mouth, and fills us with joy unſpeakable and glorious*. They are made by God, and they make over God to us, as our Portion, and Chriſt as our Saviour, and the Spirit as our Sanctifier, and

all good things both here and hereafter as our Inheritance, and therefore may well be called *exceeding great and precious Promises.*

3 Because they put a price upon the New Testament; for wherein doth the New Testament exceed the Old, unless it be in this, because it is *founded upon better Promises?* Heb. 8. 6. and *bringeth in a better hope,* Heb. 7. 19.

4 Because they put a *price upon all the blessings of God.* A little mercy reached out to us, as a fruit of a Promise, is more worth than a world of blessings coming to us meerly by way of Providence. A man may receive blessings from God upon a double account, either *ex largitate,* or *ex promissa,* either by way of Providence, or by way of Promise. 1 By way of providence: *Thus God gives the earth to the Sons of men,* Psal. 115. 16. Thus he gave one hundred twenty and seven Provinces to *Ahashuerus.* Thus he sets up the *basest of men to rule over Nations,* Dan. 4. 7.

2 By way of promise, Thus he gives health, wealth, and all outward

ward comforts unto his Children. For *godlineſs hath the Promiſe of this life, and that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 4. 8. Now you muſt know that a little bleſſing coming to us, as a fruit of the Promiſe, is more worth than a thouſand bleſſings coming to us, only by way of Providence. And therefore *David* ſaith, *A little that the righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked,* Pſal. 37. 16. And the reaſon is.

1 Becauſe bleſſings given by vertue of a promiſe, are ſigns of Gods ſpecial love, and come flowing to us from the ſame love with which God gives us Chriſt, they are the fruit of Covenant-love.

2 Becauſe we have them as bleſſings. A man may have a bleſſing, and yet not have it as a bleſſing. The *Iſraelites* had Quails ſent them immediately from God, which was a bleſſing in it ſelf, but was not ſent to them as a bleſſing: For while *the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them.* The wicked have bleſſings, but not as bleſſings, but as the Cup in *Benja-* Pſal. 17. 30, 31.

mins

mins Sack, which proved a ſnare to him, rather then a mercy. But the Godly have bleſſings as bleſſings: they have grace with them to improve them for Gods glory, they have not only the bleſſings, but a thankful heart for them, and a fruitful heart under them, which is a certain ſign that they have them as bleſſings.

3 Becauſe they are pledges to them of better mercies, and beginnings of better, they are not *mercies*, but *arrha*; not their *wages*, but an *earneſt* of Heaven. Now a farthing given as an earneſt of a thouſand a year, is more worth then many pounds given as a reward. A wicked man hath outward bleſſings as his Portion, his Heaven, his All; but a godly man that hath them *by vertue of a Promiſe*, hath them as a *pledg of Heaven*, and as a *beginning of eternal mercies*.

5 The Promiſes are precious, becauſe they *produce great and precious effects*; They are not only excellent in themſelves, but are alſo very powerful and operative upon all Believers. The Promiſes (as one ſaith) ſealed by the blood of Chriſt, ratified

by the Oath of God, testified by the *Spirit of Truth*, delivered by the *hand of Mercy*, and received by the *hand of Faith*, are operative words and produce rare effects in the soul. They have

1 *A Sanctifying* } *Power.*
2 *A Comforting* }

1 *A Soul Sanctifying Power*. Therefore they are said to make us *partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1.4. I say, *of the Divine Nature*, not by the communication of the *Divine Essence*, but by participation of *Divine Grace*. Not in a *Familistical sense*, (as if we were Godded into God, and Christed into Christ) but in a *spiritual sense*; we are by the Promises made partakers of the *Divine Nature*, that is, of the *Divine Graces*, by which we are made like to God in holiness. The Apostle tels us, that they have a power to *cleanse us from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and to enable us to perfect holiness in his fear*, 2 Cor. 7.1.

2 *A Comforting Power*. They are able to comfort us in the worst of

days.

days, and dangers. O how precious is a promise to a distressed Christian, in the hour of extremity! The Sun is not more comfortable to a man in a dark Dungeon, or food to a man ready to starve, or water to a man ready to die for thirst. The promises of God are always precious, but never more precious than in times of misery and calamity; and therefore let us in such times especially meditate upon the preciousness of them.

The third Meditation, Meditate on the freeness of the promises.

3 You must *meditate* upon the *freeness* of the promises. The promises are the outward discoveries of Gods eternal love to his people. Now nothing moved God to enter into Covenant with them, and to engage himself to them by promise, and thereby to become their debtor, but his free love and mercy; and therefore they are said to be given us of God, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises.* God promiseth in his Word, not only to love us, but to love us freely. *Hos.* 14. 4. *I will heal their back-sliding, and love them freely.* The reason why God makes us

his

his people, is not from any worth in us, but only becauſe it pleaſeth him ſo to do, 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *The Lord will not forſake his people for his great Names ſake, becauſe it pleaſed the Lord to make you his people.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the great and fundamental Promiſe, the root of the other Promiſes, is freely tendred in the Goſpel, and freely given, *Joh.* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,* &c. Rev. 22. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

The fourth Meditation, meditate on the ſtability of the promiſes.

4 You muſt meditate on the *firmneſs, faithfulneſs, unchangeableneſs,* and *immutability* of the Promiſes: they are the Promiſes of that God, who cannot deny himſelf. *Promiſſa hæc tua ſunt Domine* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *& quis falli timet, cum promittit ipſa veritas; Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but one jot or tittle of the Word ſhall not paſs.* There is no promiſe which God hath made, though never ſo improbable, and impoſſible to fleſh and blood, but it ſhall come to paſs in due time; whatſo-

whatſoever he hath promiſed in *his goodneſs*, he will perform by *his power*, *God is not a man that he ſhould lie, neither the Son of Man that he ſhould repent: Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?* Numb. 23. 19. God hath promiſed that the ſame bodies that die, ſhall riſe again at the laſt day. This is incredible to natural Reaſon. The *Stoicks* and *Epicures* derided it, when it was preached by *Paul*, Acts 17.32. But hath God ſaid it, and ſhall he not do it? *Is the Lords hand ſhortned?* Therefore Chriſt tells the Sadducees, *Mat.* 22. 27. *You err, not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God.* God is *Omnipotent*, and therefore able to *do above what we can ask or think*: God hath promiſed at the Reſurrection, to make our *vile bodies like unto the glorious body of Chriſt*: This is impoſſible to natural reaſon, but mark what the Apoſtle ſaith, *Phil.* 3. 21. *Who ſhall change our vile bodies, and faſhion them like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things to himſelf.* God hath pro-

promiſed, that before the end of the world, there ſhall be a *National converſion of the Jews*; *that the Kingdoms of the World ſhall become the Kingdoms of our Lord & Saviour*; And that *Babylon ſhall fall*. Theſe are the Promiſes of God, who cannot lie; *Faithful is he, who hath ſaid it, who alſo will do it*, 1 Theſ. 5, 24. Though the things promiſed ſeem impoſſible to men, yet with God all things are poſſible: Therefore the Apoſtle proves the future Converſion of the *Jews*, by an Argument drawn from the Power of God, *Rom.* 11. 23. *God is able to graft them in again*. The like is brought to prove the ruine of Antichriſt, *Rev.* 18. 8. *Her Plagues ſhall come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire, for ſtrong is the Lord God, who judgeth her*. The Promiſes are a firm Foundation to build our Salvation upon, an Anchor both ſure and ſtedfaſt. When *David* was taken by the *Philiſtins*, he was ſo ſupporred by the Promiſe of God, that he did not fear what man could do againſt him;

Rom. 11. 25, 26. Rev. 11. 15. Rev. 18, 2. Mat. 19. 26.

there-

therefore he repeats it three times, Pſal. 56. 3, 10. *In God I will praiſe his Word, in God I will praiſe his Word; in God I will praiſe his Word:* (that is, his Word of promiſe) *I will not fear what fleſh can do unto me:* the Scripture builds all the hope and comfort of a Chriſtian upon the *faithfulneſs of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 9. *God is faithful, by whom*, &c. 1 Theſ. 5. 23, 24. 1 Cor. 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able*, &c. 2 Theſ. 3. 3. *The Lord is faithful, who ſhall eſtabliſh you*, &c. *Heb.* 10. 33. *For he is faithful that hath promiſed.* Memorable is that ſaying of *David*, Pſal. 138. 2. *For thou haſt magnified thy Word above all thy Name:* Which words are to be underſtood (as *David Kimhi*, and our *Engliſh* Annotations ſay) *Hyſteron proteron*; that is, thou haſt by thy Word (that is, by performing thy Word and promiſes) *Magnified thy Name above all things*; or as *Ainſworth*, Thy word of promiſe in Chriſt, and thy faithfulneſs in performing of it, doth more exalt thy name, than any thing by which thou art made known. O

then

then let all the Saints of God, who are heirs of the promiſes, meditate frequently upon the *preciouſneſs, freeneſs, firmneſs, unchangeableneſs,* and *immutability* of them.

5 You muſt meditate upon the *fulneſs* and *richneſs* of the promiſes. The promiſes are the Saints *Magazine* and *ſpiritual Treaſure*; they are called the *unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, Ephes. 3. 6, 7. It is one of the greateſt titles belonging to a Saint, to be ſtiled *an Heir of the Promiſes.* That man that hath a right to all the promiſes in the Bible, is the richeſt man in the world; For *God is his* (and he that hath him that hath all things, hath all things) *Chriſt is his* (and Chriſt is all in all) the *Spirit is his* (and he who hath the Spirit, hath all good things, as appears by comparing *Matth.* 7. 11. with *Luk.* 11. 13. In the firſt it is ſaid —— *How much more ſhall your Father in Heaven, give good things.* &c. In the ſecond, *How much more ſhall your Heavenly Father give the holy Spirit,* &c?) Grace and Glory, and all outward good things are his.

The fifth meditation, meditate on the richneſs of the Promiſes. Heb. 8. 17

Qui habet habentem omnia, habet omnia.

his. It is said of the *Great Duke of Guise*, that (though he was poor, as to his present possessions) yet he was the richest man in *France*, in Bills, Bonds and Obligations, because he had engaged all the Noble-men in *France* unto himself, by preferring of them. A true and real Christian is the richest man in the world, in Promises and Obligations, for he hath the Great God engaged by Promise to be his God, and the *God of his*. As *Charles* the first, commanded his Herald in a Challenge to *Francis* the first, King of *France*, to proclaim him with all his titles, stiling him *Emperour of Germany, King of Castile, Arragon, Naples, Sicily, &c.* But *Francis* commanded his Herald, to call him so often King of *France*, as the other had titles by all his Countrys; implying, that *France* alone was more worth then all his Countreys: So when a wicked man brags of his *Lordships* and great possessions, when he boasteth of his thousands a year, a *Child of God* may say, *God is mine, God is mine*, &c. I am richer then all the wicked men in the world.

6 You muſt meditate on the Latitude and extenſion of the promiſes. The promiſes are the *Saints Catholicon*, and *Panacea*. There is no condition a child of God can be in, but he may find, not only a promiſe, but a ſuitable and ſeaſonable promiſe to comfort him in it. And herein eſpecially conſiſteth the *ſpiritual Excellency*, and *Heavenly Wiſdom of a Chriſtian*, not only to ſtudy the promiſes in general, but to labour to find out; and having found out, to meditate upon ſuch kind of promiſes which are moſt ſuitable, and moſt ſeaſonable to the condition he is in. As for example.

The ſixth meditation, meditate on the latitude and extenſion of the Promiſes.

If thou art poor in eſtate, meditate on *Pſal.* 34. 10. *Mat.* 6. 33. *Heb.* 13. 5.

If barren, and without children, meditate on *Iſa.* 56. 5.

If perſecuted for Chriſts ſake, meditate on *Mat.* 5. 10. 1 *Pet.* 4. 12, 13, 14. *Pſal.* 94. 12.

If ſick, and under tormenting pains, meditate on *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Iſa.* 63. 9. *Rom.* 8. 28.

If reproached, ſlandered, and falſly

falsly accused, meditate on *Matth.* 10. 25. *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. *Luke* 6. 22, 13.

If Satan tempts thee, and thou art not able to resist him, meditate on *Rom.* 19. 20 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *Gen.* 3. 15. 1 *Joh.* 3. 8.

If thy corruptions be too strong for thee, meditate on *Rom.* 6. 14 *Mic.* 7. 16.

If God hides his face from thee, and thou sittest in darkness, and seest no light, meditate on *Isa.* 50. 10. *Isa.* 54. 7, 8.

If ready to faint in waiting upon God, and in expecting the fulfilling of his promises, meditate on *Isa.* 30. 18. *Isa.* 63. 3. *Isa.* 40. 28, 29, 30. *Mal.* 3. 1.

If ready to die, and full of fears and doubts, meditate on 1 *Co.* 15. 55. 56, 57. *Hos.* 13. 14. *Rev.* 14. 13 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 8.

The seventh meditation, meditate on the variety of the Promises.

7 You must meditate on the variety of the Promises, and their difference and distinction one from the other. The Promises are like unto the Stars in the Firmament.

1 For their multitude, they are very

very many. The Scripture is beſpangled with Promiſes, as the Heavens are with Stars. It were happy if the Saints would prove *ſpiritual Aſtronomers*, and make it their work to ſtudy the nature of theſe Stars.

2 For their *beauty excellency*, and *influence*. Every Star is beautiful in its kind, and very uſeful and advantagious, ſo are the Promiſes. And as the Stars are moſt comfortable in the darkneſs of the night; ſo are the Promiſes in the night of trouble and adverſity.

3 And eſpecially for their *diſtinction & difference*. For one Star differs from another in glory, 1 *Cor.* 15. 41. *There is one glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, another of the Stars.* So do the Promiſes differ exceedingly one from the other in beauty and excellency. Some are temporal, ſome ſpiritual, ſome of things that are eternal; Some are conditional, ſome abſolute; Some are promiſes to thoſe that have grace, ſome are promiſes of grace; Some are general, others particular; Some are Original, Fundamen-

damental, and Fountain-promiſes (as the promiſe of Jeſus Chriſt, of God being our God, and of the Holy Ghoſt) others are *derivative, depending* and *rivolet Promiſes*, (as the promiſes of all outward comforts here, and of eternal life hereafter.) Now it is our duty to take notice of every Ray of Gold, to meditate upon all the Promiſes, both *ſpiritual, temporal*, and *eternal*; both *conditional*, and *abſolute*; both of *grace*, and to *grace*, both *general*, and *particular*; but eſpecially of the *Original* and *Fundamental Promiſes*, the *Fountain-promiſes*, from whence all others, as ſo many ſtreams and rivolets, are deduced and derived.

The eight meditation, meditate on the uſefulneſs of the Promiſes.

8 You muſt meditate on the *uſefulneſs*, and *profitableneſs* of the Promiſes. I have already ſhewed you, that they are the *Conduits of grace* and *comfort*, that they have a *ſoul-ſanctifying*, and a *ſoul-comforting-power*. Give me leave to add, that the promiſes are,

1 The *breathings* of Divine love and affection.

2 The *life* and *ſoul* of Faith.

3 The

3. The *Anchor* of Hope.
4. The *Wings* of Prayer.
5. The *Foundation* of Industry.
6. The *Rayes* and *Beams* of the Son of Righteousness; And upon all these accounts are very useful and advantagious.

1. They are the *breathings of Divine love and affection.* It is an Argument of Gods wonderful love to his children, that he is pleased to enter into a Promise and Covenant to be their God, and to give them Christ, and in Christ all blessings here, and hereafter. We Read *Gen.* 17. 2, 3. When God told *Abraham* that he would make a Covenant *with him, he fell on his face as astonished* at so great a mercy, and as thankfully *acknowledging* the goodness of God towards him. The like we read of *David*: When God by *Nathan* made a promise to him, he goes into Gods *house, and prays, Who am I, O Lord, and what is my House, that the Lord my God should do this! &c.* The Promises are the *Cabinets of the tender bowels of God*, they contain the dear and tender love of God towards his e-

The Promises are the breathings of Divine love.

2 Sam. 7 11, 18, 19.

lect children, God by promiſ[illegible] makes himſelf a debtor to them. Now that God, who is bound to none (no not to the Angels of Heaven) ſhould enter into bonds; and bind himſelf to give grace and glory to his elect children, this is love above expreſſion! And there is nothing moved God to do this, but (as I have ſaid) his free grace and mercy. For though God be now bound out of juſtice and faithfulneſs to fulfil his *Promiſes*, yet nothing moved him to make theſe Promiſes, but his love and mercy, as *David* ſaith of what God had promiſed to him, 2 *Sam.* 7. 21. *According to thine own heart* (*ex meo motu voluntatis*) *and according to thy Word*, not for any thing in me. *For what am I, O Lord*, &c? Thus you ſee how the Promiſes are the *breathings of divine love and affection*, and upon *this account* are they very uſeful and profitable. For *love is love's Load-ſtone*; therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, *We love him, becauſe he loved us firſt*. The ſenſe of Gods love to us, will kindle a love in us to God. Even as the Beams of the Sun re-

Magnes amoris amor.

1 Joh. 4. 19

flecting upon a Wall, heats thoſe that walk by the Wall: So the beams of *Gods love* ſhining into our ſouls, warms our hearts with the *love of God*. *The love of God conſtrains us*, as ſaith *Paul*, 2 Cor. 5. 14. There is a *compulſive* and *conſtraining power* in love. What did not *Jacob* do for the love of *Rachel*? How was *Mephiboſheth* affected with the love of *David*? 2 Sam. 19. 8. It is our duty to love thoſe that hate us; but not to love thoſe that love us, is more then *heatheniſh* and *brutiſh*.

The Promiſes are the life and ſoul of Faith.

2. They are *the life and ſoul of Faith*. Faith without a *Promiſe* to act upon, is as a body without a ſoul, as a *dead flower* which hath no *beauty or ſweetneſs in it*; But Faith, grounded upon the Promiſes, will inable a Chriſtian to advance in all manner of holineſs: What made *Abraham forſake his Country, and his Fathers houſe, and go he knew not whither*? Nothing moved him to this, but becauſe God had promiſed to make him a great Nation, and he believed it. O all graces, none ſo cauſal of holineſs as the grace

of Faith: It is a *world-overcoming, heart-purifying, life-ſanctifying, wonder-working Grace*; and therefore the Promiſes muſt needs be very uſeful, becauſe they are the life and ſoul of faith.

The Promiſes are the Anchor of Hope. Heb. 6. 9.

3. They are the *Anchor of Hope*. Hope is called an *Anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt*; But the *Promiſes* are the *Anchor* of Hope. All Hope of Heaven, which is not founded upon a *Promiſe*, is *Preſumption*, and not *Hope*. *Preſumption* is, when a man hopes to go to Heaven upon no ground, or upon an inſufficient ground. But *true hope* is a *Hope grounded* upon a *Scripture-Promiſe*: And Hope bottomed upon *Divine Promiſes*, will mightily avail unto purity and holineſs. *Abraham, Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, lived as *Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth, becauſe they looked and hoped for a City which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God*. The Old Teſtament Saints would not *accept deliverance upon ſinful terms, becauſe they hoped for a better Reſurrection*. The Papiſts and Arminians are much miſtaken in teaching, That

Heb. 11. 9. 10.

Heb. 11.

the

the *assurance of Salvation is an enemy to godliness.* The Scripture saith the quite contrary; 1 *Joh* 3. 3. *He that hath his hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* The true *Hope of Heaven, will make us live Heavenly*

4 They are the *Wings of Prayer*: Prayer is a Divine Cordial to convey grace from Heaven into our souls: It is a *Key* to unlock the bowels of mercy, which are in God. The best way to obtain *Holiness*, is upon our knees; the best posture to fight against the Devil, is upon our knees: and therefore Prayer is not put as a part of our *Spiritual-Armour*, but added as that which must be an ingredient in every part, and which will make every part effectual. But now the Promises are the *Wings of Prayer*. Prayer without a promise, is as a *Bird without wings*. And therefore we read both of *Jacob* and *Jehoshaphat*, how they urged God in their prayer, with his promises. And certainly the *Prayers of the Saints winged with Divine Promises*, will quickly fly up to Heaven, and draw down Grace and com-

The Promises are the wings of Prayer.

2. Chron. 20. 6, 9.

comfort into their ſouls. And upon this account it is, that the promiſes are ſo uſeful to a Chriſtian, becauſe they are ſo helpful in prayer. When we pray, we muſt urge God with his Promiſes, and ſay, Lord haſt thou not ſaid, *Thou wilt circumciſe our hearts to love thee, thou wilt ſubdue our ſins, thou wilt give the Spirit to thoſe that ask it?* Lord! Thou art faithful, fulfill theſe thine own Promiſes: and we muſt remember this great Truth, *That the Promiſes God makes to us, to mortify our ſins for us, are greater helps againſt ſin, than our promiſes to God to mortifie ſin.* Many men in the day of their diſtreſs, vow and promiſe to leave ſin, and fight againſt it in the ſtrength of theſe promiſes; and inſtead of *Conquering* ſin, are *Conquered* by ſin. But if we fight againſt ſin in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and of his Promiſes; if we urge God in Prayer with his own Word, we ſhall at laſt get victory over it: For he hath ſaid, *That ſin ſhall not have Dominion over us*, Rom. 6.14.

The Promiſes are the foundation of Induſtry.

5 They are the *Foundation of Induſtry.* The Promiſes do not make men

men *lazie* and *idle*, as some scandalously say, but they are the ground of all true *labour and industry*; therefore the Apostle perswades us from the consideration of the Promises, unto the study of soul-purification, to have our Conversation without covetousness; *to flee from Idolatry, and to separate our selves from sinful communion.* Divine Promises are great incouragements unto spiritual diligence. 1 Cor. 7. 12. Heb. 13. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 13. 24. 2 Cor. 6. 17. 18.

Object. *Though* conditional *Promises be the foundation of Industry (because we cannot have the thing Promised, unless we perform the conditions)* yet absolute *Promises* (say some) *are foundations of lazinesse, and therefore they affirm, there are no* absolute Promises in *Scripture.*

Answ. Absolute Promises are made Foundations of Industry in Scripture, as well as *Conditional*: The Apostle exhorts us to *Work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* And the reason is, because God performeth nothing which he promiseth, though never so absolutely; Phil. 2. 12. 13.

lutely, but in the *diligent and conscientious use of the means on our part*. God promiseth *Ezek.* 36. 26 *to give us a new heart, and a new spirit*, &c. but then he adds, *vers.* 37. *I will yet for this, be inquired of by the house of Israel.*

Th Promises are the rays & beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

6 They are *rayes* and *beams* (as one saith) *of Christ the Son of righteousness*, in whom they are founded and established. As all the Lines in a Circumference, though never so distant, carry a man to one and the same *Center*. So all the *Promises*, carry us to *Christ the Center*. For the *Promises* are not made for any thing in us, nor have they any stability from us; but they are made in, and for Christ unto us, unto Christ in our behalf; and unto us, so far as we are members of Christ. Now Jesus Christ is the ground of all soul-purification, soul consolation, and soul-salvation; And therefore I may safely conclude, That the Promises are most singularly useful, and advantageous. And that it is the duty of all those that desire to live holily and comfortably, to consider and ponder the profitable-

Dr. Reynolds on the sinfulness of sin.

ness and beneficialness, of the Promises.

The 9th meditation, meditate on the necessity of getting an interest in the Promises.

9. And lastly, You must meditake on the *great necessity that lieth upon all men to get a Scripture Interest in the Promises*. This I add to awaken Christians to attend diligently to this Discourse about the Promises, and to shew them the necessity of minding and of studying them. For he that hath no right to them, is in a *faithless, hopeless, comfortless, desperate*, and *damnable condition*. All the happiness of a Christian both here and hereafter, consisteth especially in his right and title to the Promises. The Scripture tells us in express words, that he that is a *stranger from the Promise, is without Christ, without God, without hope*. Eph. 2. 20. Sad is the condition of that man, who hath no Interest in God, nor in Christ, and who is without hope. And such is the condition of him who is a stranger to the Promises; for all hope of Heaven, which is not *bottomed* upon a *Promise*, is *Presumption*, and *soul-delusion*. All comfort and joy which is not grounded upon a Promise, is *Soul-cozenage*;

and all faith not anchored upon a Promiſe, is nothing elſe but *flattery*, and *ſoul-mockery*. Conſider this, you that are full of joy and comfort, and (as you ſay) relie upon Chriſt for Salvation: Tell me, what Promiſe have you to build this faith, this hope, this comfort upon? For there are thouſands that flatter themſelves into Hell by a falſe hope of *Heaven*; thouſands which promiſe to themſelves to go to Heaven, but have no *Promiſe* for it *from God*. Such were the *five fooliſh Virgins*, ſuch was the Church of *Laodicea*, ſuch were they, *Matth.* 7. 24. *Hoſ.* 8. 2, 3. *Micah* 3. 10, 11. Remember this, and let it be daily in your thoughts: you that have not true right to the Promiſes, your *Faith* is *Faction*, your *Hope* is *Preſumption*, and your *Joy* is *Deluſion*. To be a *ſtranger from the Promiſe*, is to be *without God*, *without Chriſt*, and *without Hope*. So much for the ſecond particular, viz. *Meditate on the Promiſes*.

The end of the fourth Sermon.

RULES

RULES FOR THE RIGHT APPLICATION OF THE PROMISES.

SERMON V.

Pſal. 119. 92.

Unleſs thy Law had been my delights I ſhould then have periſhed in mine afflictions.

NOW I come to the third and laſt particular. He that would make the *Promiſes*, as ſpiritual bladders to keep him from drowning in the deep Waters of affliction, muſt not only make a *Catalogue* of them, and *meditate* upon them, but he muſt make *Application* of them to

to his own ſoul, as belonging to him in particular; He muſt (as it is ſaid of the godly Patriarchs, *Heb.* 11. 13.) *be perſwaded of them, and embrace them*; he muſt hugg and kiſs them as his *rich portion*, and *glorious inheritance*. And this is the chief of all: For no man can receive any comfort from a Promiſe, who is not able to make out his intereſt in that Promiſe. As the life of a Sermon is in the Application of it unto our ſelves; ſo the life of a *Promiſe* is in the appropriation of it. *Quid eſt Deus, ſi non eſt meus?* What am I the better (ſaith *Origen*) that Chriſt took upon him the *fleſh of a Virgin*, if he took not *my fleſh*? What was the great Prince the better for the miraculous plenty in *Samaria*, when the Prophet told him, that he ſhould *ſee it with his eyes, but not eat of it*? As the man, who when he was ready to be drowned, ſaw a Rain-bow (which was a ſign that the World ſhould never be again drowned) ſaid, *Quid mihi proderit hæc Iris, ſi ego peream? What am I the better for the Rain-bow, if I periſh?* So may I ſay, what is a man the bet-

better for the rich Mine of treaſure contained in the Promiſes, if he hath no ſhare in it?

There are three ſorts of Profeſſors of Religion.

1. Some lay claim to the *Promiſes*, when they have no right to them; ſuch are your *preſumptuous ſinners* who take it for granted, that the Promiſes belong to them, who preſume themſelves into Hell by a falſe hope in the Promiſes; who make a *Feather-bed* of the Promiſes, upon which they ſleep ſecurely in ſin: As *Thraſilaus* (a *mad Athenian*) laid claim to every Ship that came to *Athens*, though he had right to none: So a preſumptuous ſinner lays a claim to every promiſe, though he hath right to none; he inlargeth them beyond their bounds, and maketh the conditional Promiſes to be abſolute; and ſuch as belong only to thoſe that are in Chriſt, to belong to him, though he be not in Chriſt: He ſucks the *poyſon* of ſin, and ſecurity, out of the *ſweet* Flowers of the *Promiſes*.

2. Some have an intereſt in the Promiſe,

Promiſes, and know their intereſt; theſe live in Heaven while they are upon earth; theſe *rejoyce in tribulation*, and are *more than Conquerours* over the greateſt afflictions; theſe are ſecure from periſhing in the day of diſtreſs. That man, who taking the Bible into his hand, can ſay upon right grounds, *All the Promiſes in this book are my Portion*, and I have a right and title to them, this man is *happy above expreſſion*.

3 Some have an intereſt in the *Promiſes*, but do not know their intereſt, and therefore dare not (in the hour of trouble) apply them for their *ſupportation and conſolation*. Such are your *broken-hearted, wounded, diſtreſſed*, and *deſerted Chriſtians*: Such can receive no comfort from the Promiſes in the day of affliction. When they begin to apply them for their ſupport, the Devil ſuggeſteth to them, and their own doubting hearts tell them, that they miſ-apply them, and that they belong not to them. When a godly Miniſter (whoſe office is to *ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to thoſe that are weary*, Iſa. 50. 4.) indeavours by the Application

plication of the Promiſes to comfort them, their *ſouls refuſe to be comforted*, they exclude themſelves from having a right to Chriſt, and his *Promiſes*, though Chriſt would not have them excluded. They groundleſly fear that their names are written in the *black Book of Reprobation*, and that all the curſes of the Law are their portion; hence it is that they live ſo uncomfortably and diſconſolately in the time of affliction. Now then for the help of ſuch perſons, who have a true title to the Promiſes, but know it not, who *walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light*, who believe they are Hypocrites, when they are not, and that they are not in Chriſt, when they are; (that I may be Gods Inſtrument to enable ſuch to make Application of the precious Promiſes unto their own ſouls in particular, in the hour of trouble, for their everlaſting ſupportation and conſolation) I ſhall lay down theſe enſuing Rules and Directions.

Rule 1.

The firſt Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

1 Whoſoever in a Goſpel-ſenſe doth obey the *commanding Word of God*,

God, hath a real intereſt in the *Promiſing Word of God*: Though thou canſt not perfectly obey the Will of God, yet if thou doſt *truly deſire*, and *induſtriouſly endeavour* to obey it in all things; If God hath written his Law in thy heart, and given thee a Goſpel-frame, inclining thee to the obedience of all his Commandments ſincerely, though not perfectly; this is an infallible evidence, that thou haſt a right and portion in all the Promiſes. This is
Exod. 19. 5. that which God ſaith, *If ye will obey my voice in deed, then ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure, &c.* If ye will obey my voice in deed, not only in word, and in ſhew, but in deed, and in truth. Thus *Jer. 7. 5, 7. If ye thorowly amend your ways, if ye thoroughly execute judgement,* &c. *then will I cauſe you to dwell in this place,* &c. If ye thorowly amend, &c. not only in ſome things, but in all things; not only outwardly, but inwardly alſo. This Rule is expreſsly delivered by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of the life that now is, and that which is to come.* If thou beeſt a godly man

in

in a Goſpel-ſenſe, that is, one who truly and ſincerely endeavoureth to be godly; If thou makeſt Gods Will, thy *Rule to live by*, and not thy own; *Gods glory* thy end, and not thine own carnal intereſt; *Gods love thy Principle*; If thy *Rules Aims*, and *Principles* be godly, all the Promiſes of this Life, and of the Life to come, belong to thee. It is worth the obſerving, that all the Promiſes of Life and Salvation are *conditional*: *Happineſs* is intailed upon *Holineſs*, *Glory* upon *Grace*: You ſhall read in Scripture of the *bleſſings* of the *Covenant*, and of the *bond* of the *Covenant*; of the *bleſſings* of the *Promiſe*, and of the *condition* of the *Promiſes*. If ever you would aſſure your ſelves of your intereſt in the *bleſſings of the Covenant*, you muſt try your ſelves by your ſincere performance of the *condition*. Thus Chriſt is promiſed to none but ſuch as believe; pardon of ſin, to none but ſuch as repent; and Heaven to none but ſuch as perſevere in well doing. Tell me then, Canſt thou ſay, as in Gods preſence, that thou

Ezek 20. 37.

haſt

haſt reſpect to all Gods Command-ments, (though thou faileſt in all, yet thou haſt a reſpect to all) that thou obeyeſt God *indeed*, and in *truth*, and that thou ſincerely labourest to be godly? This is a certain ſign, that all the *Promiſes are thy portion*; but you that are ungodly, and do not thorowly amend your ways, you that ſlight, undervalue, and deſpiſe the *Commanding Word*, you have no part, no portion in the *promiſing Word*.

But it may be a diſtreſſed Chriſtian (though without juſt cauſe) will ſay, that he is afraid that he doth not ſincerely obey the *commanding Word*, and therefore dares not apply to himſelf the *promiſing Word*; wherefore I add,

Rule 2.

The ſecond Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

2. *The more thou art afraid, leſt thou ſhouldeſt have no right to the promiſes, the more right thou haſt (in all probability) to them.* This I ſpeak only to the diſtreſſed Chriſtian, not that I commend his fear: But this I ſay, This fear which thou art poſſeſſed withal, is a probable ſign that thou haſt an intereſt in the

Promiſes

Promises. For a *presumptuous sinner* never doubts of his right to them, but takes it as a maxim not to be denied, that they belong to him. It is a comfortable saying of Mr. *Greenham's*, *when thou hearest the Promises, and art in a cold sweat, and hast a fear and a trembling seizing upon thee, lest they should not belong to thee; doubt not, but that they do belong to thee*; For Christ hath said, *Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* And the Prophet *Isaiah* calls upon those who are of a fearful heart, *to be strong, and fear not*; and tells us, for our comfort, that God will look with an eye of favour *upon him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his Word.*

Mat. 11. 28.

Isa. 35. 4.

Isa. 66. 2.

Rule. 3.

3. *The more sensible thou art of thine own unworthiness to lay hold upon the Promises, the more thou art fitted and qualified to lay hold upon them.* For the Promises are (as I have shewed) the fruit of *Free-grace.* Nothing moved God to enter into Covenant with his people, and thereby

The third Rule for the right Application of the Promises.

to

Sola misericordia deducit Deum ad homines, & sola misericordia reducit homines ad Deum.

to *become their Debtor*, but his *free love*. *Free Grace brought Christ down from Heaven, and it is free Grace must carry us up to Heaven.* Christ himself is called, *the gift of God*, John 4. 10. *Moses* tells the Israelites, Deut. 7. 7, 8. *The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor chuse you, because you were more in number than any people*, &c. *But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the Oath which he had sworn unto your Fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you?* &c. God doth not love us, because we are *worthy of his love*, but because he loves us, therefore he *makes us worthy*. We must not *bring worthiness to Christ*, but *fetch worthiness from Christ*. And therefore, if thou beest sensible of thine own nothingness, emptiness, and unworthiness, lay hold upon that excellent promise, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Blessed are those who are sensible of their spiritual want, for to them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven, as certainly as if they were already in it.

Mat. 5. 3.

Rule 4.

The fourth Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

4. Study thy Intereſt in the *main and fundamental Promiſes*, and that will help thee to make out thy Intereſt in all the other; *The main and fundamental Promiſe*, is the *Promiſe of Chriſt*; for all Promiſes, whether Spiritual or Temporal, are made to us in and through him. 2 Cor. 1. 20. God hath promiſed, *never to leave us, nor forſake us*, and that *all things ſhall work together for our good*; that is, if we be in Chriſt. God hath ſaid, *all things are ours, whether* 1 Cor. 3. *Paul, or Apollos, whether life or death, whether things preſent, or things to come*; but it is with this Proviſo, if we be *Chriſts*: Whoſoever takes any comfort from any Temporal Promiſe, and is not in Chriſt, doth but delude and cheat himſelf. This then is thy work O Chriſtian; ſtudy thy intereſt in Chriſt, make out that, and make out all. If no Intereſt in *Chriſt*, no Intereſt in the *Promiſes*; If an Intereſt in *Chriſt*, an Intereſt in the *Promiſes*; let this then be thy daily buſineſs to make it out to thy ſoul, that *Chriſt* is thine.

Queſt.

Three things to be studied in order to the making use of our interest in Christ.

Quest. *How shall I be able to do this?*

Answ. For this purpose you must diligently study three things.

1. The *Universality* of the Promise of Christ.
2. The *Freeness* of it.
3. The *Condition* upon which he is tendred.

First, The universality of the Promise of Christ. Mark 16. 15, 16.

1 *The Universality of the Promise of Christ.* Christ Jesus with all his benefits is promised to every one who is willing to lay hold on him, as he is tendred in the Gospel. The Apostles are commanded to go into *all the World, and to Preach the Gospel to every Creature; he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved, &c.* If thou hast a heart to believe, be thy sins never so great, it is for the honour of Jesus Christ, to pardon them. As the Sea covers great Rocks, as well as small, so the Mercy of God in Christ will pardon great sins, as well as little. It will cost Christ as little to wash away the guilt of great sins, as of small. Christ is a great *Physitian.* And *David* prayeth. *Pardon my Iniquity, for it is great,* Psalm 25.

Magnus de cælo venit medicus, quia magnus in terra jacebat ægrotus. *Aug.*

11. Though thy ſins be never ſo bloodily circumſtantiated, though never ſo often reiterated, though thou bee'ſt never ſo loathſome, yet if thou canſt believe, *There is a fountain opened to the houſe of* David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem; *for ſin, and for uncleanneſs*; and therefore let no man exclude himſelf from a right to Chriſt, who is willing to take Chriſt upon Chriſts terms. He that excludes himſelf, offers the greateſt injury imaginable.

Firſt, Unto Jeſus Chriſt, for he makes him a Lyar: Chriſt hath ſaid, *If any man come to me, I will in no wiſe caſt him out*: and he ſaith, Chriſt will caſt me out, although I do come to him Joh. 6. 37.

Secondly, Unto his own ſoul. For he neceſſitates himſelf unto damnation; for Chriſt hath ſaid expreſly, *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned.*

Object. *But I am afraid that I am a* Reprobate, *and that God hath excluded me from having an Intereſt in* Chriſt.

Anſw. Who told thee ſo? It is one

one great ſign thou art not, becauſe the Devil would perſwade thee that thou art. But howſoever, *Secret things belong to God, but thoſe things which are revealed, to us and our children.* God hath kept the *black Book* of *Reprobation ſecret:* He openeth the *whole Book of Election* to ſome of his Children, but he keeps his *black Book* unrevealed. It is a ſin for any man to think himſelf a Reprobate (unleſs he can prove that he hath ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt) for this thought would hinder him from the uſe of means for his Salvation, and cauſe him to deſpair, which is a ſin of the firſt magnitude, and therefore take heed of complementing thy ſelf into Hell by a ſinful modeſty, in refuſing to beleive in Chriſt: Take heed of dallying or delaying in the great work of *laying hold on Chriſt, upon Chriſts terms.* Remember, God excludes none from Chriſt, but ſuch as exclude themſelves by unbelief. And remember, *Whoſoever believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

2. You

2. You must study the *Freeness* of the Promise of Christ. God promiseth Jesus Christ freely, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; Come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come buy Wine and Milk without money, and without price*, &c. Christ is offered in the Gospel, *sine pretio, sine merito, sine motivo, without price, without merit, and without any motive* inducing on our parts. Therefore the Holy Ghost saith, *Whosoever will, let him take of the Water of life freely.* Let not then thy undeservedness hinder *thee* from laying hold upon Christ, as thy portion. Say not, I am not worthy that Christ should own me. Christ will own thee, not because thou art *Worthy*, but because *he delights in Mercy*, *Mic.* 7. 18. Say not, I am not humbled enough, and therefore I dare not lay hold upon Christ. For humiliation is not required to make us precious to Christ, but to make Christ precious to us; and if thou beest so far humbled, as to be willing to take Christ upon Christs terms, thou art *humbled enough, unto divine acceptation,*

Study the freeness of the Promise of Christ.

Rev. 22. 17. Isa. 55. 1.

ration, though not unto *divine satisfaction*. Every ſtung *Iſraelite*, who was enabled to look up to the *Brazen Serpent*, was healed, though he was not ſtung to that proportion that another *Iſraelite* was.

Study the condition upon which Chriſt is Promiſed.

3. You muſt ſtudy the condition upon which Chriſt is promiſed. It is certain, Chriſt is not tendred abſolutely, without any condition. Chriſt is not offered to a proud ſinner, reſolving ſo to continue, or to a drunkard, reſolving to perſevere in his drunkenneſs. Thoſe Texts which declare the *Freeneſs* of the offer of Chriſt, do alſo mention a condition to be performed by thoſe that will have him, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Rev.* 22, 15. In both places the condition of thirſting is expreſſed: *Let him that is athirſt come. Ho every one that thirſteth*

Queſt. *Doth not the mentioning of a condition take away the freeneſs of the tender of Chriſt.*

Anſw. By no means. The Reaſon is, becauſe this very condition is the free Gift of God. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 4. 16. *Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace.*

The

The condition of Faith doth not make the offer of Christ, not to be of grace: but therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace; for as Christ, so also faith is *the gift of God*. We do not preach conditions unto Justification in a *Popish* sense (as if they merited out of congruity the pardon of sin) or in an *Arminian* sense (as if he could do any thing by our free-will (without grace) to dispose our selves unto Justification) but in a *Scripture*-sense we say, that all those on whom God intends to bestow Christ freely, he freely openeth their eyes to see their undone condition out of Christ, he humbles them under the sense of their said condition, and out of his free mercy enables them by faith to lay hold upon Christ, and to accept of him upon his own terms. Faith is not the *cause for which*, but the *cause without which*, God will not give us Christ.

Quest. *But what is the condition upon which Christ is promised?*

Answ. There is (if I may so speak) *Conditio præparans & disponens*, and *conditio applicans*, the

condition required to the preparing and diſpoſing us for an intereſt in Chriſt, and the *Condition applying Chriſt to us, and bringing him into our poſſeſſion.*

1 The condition required to the *diſpoſing, preparing, and fitting us for an Intereſt in Chriſt.* And this is the ſight of our ſins, the ſenſe of them, and a real willingneſs to part with them. There is no man qualified according to the Goſpel, to reſt upon Chriſt for pardon of his ſins, who is not really willing to part with them. And no man will be willing to part with his ſins (which he naturally loves as himſelf) unleſs he ſee the ſinfulneſs and curſedneſs of them, and feels in ſome meaſure the ſmart of them. The Woman who had the bloody ſlue, never thought of coming to Chriſt, till all her money was ſpent in vain among other Phyſitians. The Prodigal Child would never have returned to his Father, had he not ſeen himſelf utterly undone by wandring from him.

2 The *condition applying Chriſt to*

us, and bringing him into our possession. This is Faith, which therefore is the proper condition of the Gospel, upon which Christ is tendred. Now this Faith is not a bare receiving, and taking of Christ: For there are many who take him, and mistake him, (There is no man but is willing when he is dying, to take Christ, as the men of the old world were willing to go into the Ark, when the flood came) But this taking and receiving of Christ (if it be right) hath six properties.

Right Receiving of Christ hath six Properties

1. It is a *receiving of Christ* with all his appurtenances. Christ and disgrace, and reproach, and poverty; Christ and his Cross. There are many would be glad of Christ, but they will not take up his Cross. They would take Christ down from the Cross, (as *Joseph* of *Arimathea* did) *and leave the Cross behind them.* But he that takes Christ aright, will be as willing to wear a Crown of thorns for his sake, as a Crown of Gold.

2. It is a *receiving of Christ* in all his Offices, as our *King*, *Priest* and *Prophet*. A true Believer is as wil-

willing to receive Christ into his soul, as he is that Christ should receive him into Heaven; he is as willing to have Christ Reign over him, as he is to Reign with Christ in Heaven. He desires not only to be *saved*, but to be *healed* by *Christ*.

3. It is a receiving of *Christ into every room* of the Soul; for Christ will come into *every room*, or into *never a room*. A true Believer opens every door unto Christ; he gives him the Lock and Key of the whole man, and desires that he would come and reside in *every room*.

4. It is a *receiving of Christ*, and *him* only. For Christ must rule *alone*, or *not at all*. An Hypocrite would compound with Christ, and together with the false Mother, divide the Child; but a true believer saith with the Prophet, O *Lord our God! Other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but now by thee only will we make mention of thy Name.* And with the true Mother he will give the whole to God.

5. It is a *receiving of Christ in health*, as well as in *sickness*; in pro-

sperity

ſperity, as well as in *adverſity*; in *youth*, as well as in *Old Age*; in *life*, as well as in *Death*. Moſt people make uſe of Chriſt, meerly as a ſhelter againſt a ſtorm, for their own ends (as the *Athenians* did of *Themiſtocles*) and when the ſtorm is over, forſake him: moſt people fly to Chriſt in their diſtreſs, as *Joab* did to the *Horns* of the *Altar*, and when they can ſerve the Devil no longer, then they begin to think of ſerving of God: But a true believer will give his beſt days to God, as well as his worſt; he deſires not only to die in Chriſt, but to live for Chriſt, he receives Chriſt in health, &c.

6. It is a *receiving of Chriſt*, not only for an *hour*, or a *day*, or a *year*, but *for ever*. True Faith marries the ſoul to Chriſt, never to part. Once a Member of Chriſt, for ever a Member.

Now there is no Child of God, of what ſize ſoever (though he be but as a Toe in Chriſts Body) who cannot truly ſay, that he is willing to receive Jeſus Chriſt with all theſe Properties, to receive all Chriſt,

with all his appurtenances, and to receive him only in *every room*, in *health*, and *for ever*. And therefore let not the Devil, or thy misgiving heart, or thy melancholy fancy, keep thee off from believing that Christ Jesus is thy portion, and that thou hast an interest in the *main* and *fundamental Promise*, and by that, in all the other. Do to Christ as the *Shunamitish* woman did to the Prophet, *lay fast hold on him*; and suffer not the Devil to cause thee to let go thy hold. Oh that there might be this day a blessed and happy Marriage between Jesus Christ, and every distressed Christian.

2 Kings 4. 2.

Object. *But suppose I am willing to take* Christ *upon* Christs terms, *can I rest assured that* Christ *will receive me?*

Answ. Yes, doubtless. For he hath said, he will; and he is truth it self, and cannot lye. Indeed a poor wounded sinner will sometimes confess that he is willing with all his heart to receive Christ upon his own terms; but he is afraid lest Christ should refuse to receive him.

Joh. 6. 37.

Isa. 55. 1. Rev. 22. 5.

But

But this is a needleſs fear: For Chriſt will in no wiſe refuſe thoſe that come to him. *To as many as receive him, to all thoſe he will give power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name.* Joh. 1. 12. *He that believeth hath everlaſting life, and ſhall never come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death to life.* Joh. 5. 24. So much for the fourth Rule.

If theſe Rules and Directions already named, will not enable thee to apply the Promiſes, ſo as to keep thee from periſhing in the day of diſtreſs; Let me add,

Rule 5.

The fifth Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

5. *If thou canſt not lay hold upon the Promiſes made to thoſe who are in the higheſt form in Chriſts School, lay hold upon the Promiſes made to thoſe who are in the lower formes.* In Chriſts School, there are divers ſorts of Scholars, ſome are in the high form, ſome in the middle, ſome in the loweſt, ſome are Babes in Chriſts School, ſome are grown Chriſtians, ſome are as tall Cedars, ſome are as low ſhrubs. Now you muſt know that it is our duty to labour to be of the higheſt form. He

hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: And therefore if thou hast truth of grace, though but as a grain of Mustard seed, do not doubt, but that God in the diligent use of means, will enable thee to persevere.

I might add, *Neh.* 1. 11. Where God promiseth to be *attentive to the prayers of those who desire to fear his Name.* And *Isa.* 26. 11. *Isa.* 26. 3: *Isa.* 65. 1. *Isa.* 55. 1, *Revel.* 22. 15. *John* 6. 37. But I forbear.

Rule 6.

The sixth Rule for the Right Application of the Promises.

If thou canst not apply to thy self for thy comfort in affliction, the *conditional Promises*, lay hold on the *absolute Promises*. I have formerly told you, that there are some Promises *conditional*, others *absolute*; some to *grace*, others of *grace*, some to those that are *godly*, others to *make us godly*: God hath not only promised to *pardon* those that repent, but to give repentance; not only to justifie those that believe, but to give us to believe; not only to give Heaven to those that love him, but to give us grace to love

Acts 5. 31. Phil. 1. 29. Deut. 30. 6 Jer. 32. 40.

love him; not only to ſave thoſe that perſevere, but to enable us to perſevere: And therefore if thou canſt not lay hold upon the Promiſes to thoſe that *are godly*, apply thoſe which are made to make us *godly*. If not thoſe which are made to thoſe that *repent*, *believe* and *perſevere*, apply thoſe wherein God promiſeth *to give us to repent*, *believe* and *perſevere*. If not the conditional, lay hold upon the abſolute.

There are theſe *differences* and *agreements*, between conditional and abſolute Promiſes.

1 For Conditional Promiſes.

1. All Promiſes of *life and ſalvation are Conditional*.

2. *Conditional Promiſes* are the *fruit of Free-grace*, as well as *Abſolute*. It is *Free-grace* which enableth us to perform the *Conditional*, and *Free-grace* which moved God to promiſe ſuch great mercies upon ſuch Conditions.

3. They are the fruit of *Rich-grace*, and *Rare-mercy*, as well as *Abſolute Promiſes*.

4. They are of great uſe to *quicken*

Mat. 5. 6. Christ saith, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, &c. Though thou findest an exceeding great want of Righteousness in thee, yet if thou hungrest and thirsteth after it, thou art blessed.

Mat. 11. 28 Christ saith, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* This Text is an Alabaster box full of precious consolation. If thy sins be a burden to thee, Christ will give thee rest; if thou carriest them about thee, not as a Golden Chain about thy neck, but as an Iron Chain about thy feet; if thou beest heavy laden with them, Christ will take them off thy shoulders, and put them upon his.

Mat. 12. 20 Christ saith, *That he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking flax, till he send forth judgement unto victory.* If thou hast grace but as a *smoaking flax*, Christ will not quench it, but assist it, till it come to a great flame.

Mat. 9. 12, 13. Christ saith, *That the whole have no need of the Physician, but they that are sick. And that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

If

If thou art a ſin-ſick-ſinner, thy name is in Chriſts Commiſſion, he came to ſave thee.

Chriſt ſaith, *The Son of Man is come to ſave that which was loſt.* If thou apprehendeſt thy ſelf to be in a loſt condition, thou art amongſt the number of thoſe whom Chriſt came to ſave. Mat. 18. 11.

The Apoſtle ſaith, *There is no condemnation to thoſe who are in Chriſt, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* Though thou haſt much fleſh in thee, and art ſometimes overtaken with ſin, yet if thou doſt not walk after the fleſh, as a ſervant after his Maſter, if thou walkeſt after the Spirit, there is no condemnation to thee. Rom. 8. 1

The Apoſtle ſaith, *If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* If we confeſs our ſins, out of a deteſtation of ſin, with bleeding hearts, and a ſincere purpoſe of forſaking them, God is bound by vertue of his Promiſe to forgive us, elſe he were unfaithful. 1 Joh. 1. 9.

The Apoſtle ſaith, *That he that* Phil. 1. 6.

hath

Qui dixit, sufficit, deficit. Non progredi est regredi.

that saith he hath *grace enough*, hath *grace little enough*. He that stints himself in his indeavours after grace, never had true Grace. We must labour to be *perfect, as God is perfect*. But yet you must also know, that he that is a *real Scholar* in *Christs School*, is in an happy condition, though he be not the best *Scholar*. And that it is our duty so to eye the *eminent graces* which are in others, as to be thereby incited to a *further progress* in grace, but not so as to be thereby *disheartned* and *discouraged*. There are many *distressed Christians* like to those who gaze so long upon the *brightness of the Sun*, that when they come into their houses, they cannot see at all, they pore so much upon the *transcendent Excellencies* which are in their Brethren, that they are stark blind in their own concernments, and cannot see any grace in themselves, and hereupon, are apt to conclude, that they are out of Gods favour. But this is a *non-sequitur*. The Foot must not say, that it is no part of the body, because it is not so eminent a part as the Head,

Head or Heart. We must rather say with the Martyr, *Blessed be God that I am a member in Christs body, though but the weakest and lowest.* We must not rest satisfied with being *low Christians*; but yet we must not therefore say, *we are no Christians.* And when we are under great tribulations and temptations, if we cannot apply to our selves for our comfort those Promises which are made to eminent Saints of the highest form, let us apply those which are made unto true Saints, though to such who are the lowest of the lowest form; and hereby we shall (through Gods blessing) find our souls marvellously *supported* and *comforted.* As for Example, Christ hath said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And therefore though thou art not *not rich in Grace*, yet if *poor in spirit*, thou art blessed. Christ saith, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Though thou canst not live without sin, yet if a mourner for thine own, and other mens sins, thou art blessed.

Mat. 5. 3.

Mat. 5. 4.

Christ

a lazy Christian, and to *encourage him to diligence*; for no man can obtain the *blessing promised*, but he that performs the *condition enjoyned*.

5. They are *rare Touchstones* to try our Interest in the Promises; For he that neglects to perform the *condition*, cannot challenge an interest in the *blessing promised* upon the performing of it.

2. For absolute Promises.

1. Though Promises to *grace* be conditional, yet Promises of *grace* are absolute, and are made by God unto Christ in the behalf of his elect Children according to that of *David Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy Possession.*

2. There are no Promises so absolute, as to exclude all endeavors on our part; God will do the things promised *for us*, but *by us*. We work, but it is *God who worketh all our works in us, and for us.*

3. Absolute promises are *foundations of industry*, as well as conditional. The truth of this I made out in the former Sermon.

4. Ab-

4 Abſolute Promiſes are *demonſtrative arguments of ſpecial election*, and of the *perſeverance* of the Saints. There are ſome peculiar ones to whom God hath Promiſed (in the uſe of means) abſolutely to *write his Law in their hearts, to cauſe them to walk in his ways*, to give them *infallibly*, and *infruſtrably*, repentance, faith, and perſeverance. The promiſe of the firſt grace, and of the crowning grace is abſolute. And therefore the Doctrine of *Special Election*, and of *Perſeverance*, muſt needs be true.

5 Abſolute Promiſes are *mighty helps to wounded Conſciences*, and *rare cordials for fainting and deſpairing Chriſtians*. When thou art in the dark, and ſeeſt no light, fly from the *conditional Promiſes*, to the *abſolute*; ſay, Lord, thou haſt not only promiſed to give pardon to thoſe who *repent*, but thou haſt exalted Chriſt for to give *Repentance*: Thou haſt not only promiſed to juſtifie thoſe who *believe*, but to give grace to *believe*. Lord fulfill thine own Promiſe unto thy ſervant, *&c.*

Object.

Object. *All my fear is that these absolute Promises do not belong to me.*

Answ. Take heed of making *desperate conclusions against thy self.* Say as the King of *Nineveh, Who knoweth but God may turn and have mercy?* Exclude not thy self? Neither man nor Angel can say, *thou art Excluded.* No man ought to believe himself to be a Reprobate (as I have shewed;) these Promises belong to all that can lay hold on them as they are tendred. As the Brazen Serpent belonged to all those who were able to look upon it; so do these Promises to all that can by faith look up, that they may be healed. Say as the four Lepers in another case, if I go on in unbelief, I am certainly damned. And therefore I will venture upon Christ, I will fly to this Ark, and if I perish, I will perish believing.

2 Kings 7.

If these directions will not suffice to comfort thee in the day of adversity, let me add.

The seventh Rule for the right Application of the Promises.

Rule 7.

All *Promises* made in *Scripture* to the *Saints in general*, are applicable to

to *every Saint in particular*. God promiseth to *Solomon*, 1 Kings 8.37,40. And *Jehoshaphat* applied this to his own particular condition, 2 *Chro.* 20. 9. God promiseth to the *Saints in general*, that he will *give them Grace and Glory*, that he will *with-hold no good thing from them*, that they shall *want nothing that is good*, and that *all outward blessings shall be added to them*. Now there is no Saint but he may as justly lay hold upon those Promises, as if his Name were named in them; And the reason is, because all the Promises do meet in Christ, as all Lines in a Center; And every Saint hath all Christ. And therefore Promises made to those that are in Christ belong to all that are in Christ.

Ps. 48. 10. Ps. 43. 10. Mat. 6. 33.

Rule 8.

All Promises made to *Particular Saints* are *applicable* to all *Saints* in the *same condition*. God promiseth by *Joshua*, that he *would never leave him, nor forsake him*. This is applied by the Apostle for the comfort of every Saint, Christ tells *Peter*, *Luke* 22.32. *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith*

The eight Rule for the right Application of the Promises.

Josh. 5. Heb. 13.5.

faith fail not. This is applicable to every Saint; Christ prayeth for thee and me, and therefore he adds, *When thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren.* Therefore the Apostle *Paul*
2 Cor. 1. 4. saith, *That God comforted him in his tribulation that he might be able to comfort those who are in trouble by the comfort wherewith he was comforted.* And the Apostle *James* propounds
James 5. 10. the example of the *Prophets* in general, and of *Job* in particular, to perswade unto patience in affliction. And therefore when thou art in any strait, consider what God hath promised unto others, in thy condition, and what God hath done to them, he will do to thee, for he is unchangable. And say not, If I were a *Paul*, a *Peter*, or a *Job*, God would do to me, as he did to them; but I am a poor, weak, unworthy creature, not worthy to be named that day which these are named. But consider, if thou beest a Member of Christs body (though but as the Toe) Christ will have a care of thee. If a Child of God (though but weak and sickly) thy Heavenly Father will pro-

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vide for thee. A Father is tender of every Child, and a man of every member of his body; so will God be of all those who belong to him, though but Babes in Christ.

Rule 9.

The Promises of the Gospel are all *concatenated*. If thou hast a true *right* to any one Promise to which Heaven is annexed, thou hast a right to all the other. As the *Commandments of God are changed together* (he that breaks one, breaks all; and he that sincerely labours to keep one, will labour to keep all, according to that Rule, *What soever is done for God, is done equally*) And as the Graces of God are linked together (and therefore Heaven is sometimes promised to our grace, because he that hath one saving grace, hath all) so also are the Promises joyned together, he that hath a right to one, hath a right to all: For they are all but *one and the same for substance*. They are all the *fruit of the same free love in God*; They are all *the branches of the same Covenant of Grace* (And therefore if thou hast a righ

The 9th Rule for the Right Application of the Promises.

Quicquid propter Deum fit, æqualiter fit. Mat. 5. 3, 8.

to the Covenant, thou haſt a right to all the Promiſes) they all carry us to Chriſt, and meet in Chriſt, and are in him *Yea*, and in him *Amen*; And therefore if thou haſt a right to Chriſt, thou haſt a right to all.

This is a point of *ſingular comfort in the worſt of days and dangers.* For ſomtimes a child of God under great afflictions, can lay hold upon one Promiſe, and not upon another, and ſome can apply thoſe which others cannot, and others thoſe which they cannot; Let all ſuch know for their great comfort, That he that hath right to one *branch of the Covenant, hath right to all.* He that hath let fall a Chain of Gold, conſiſting of divers links, into the water, if he can catch hold upon any one of the links, he will eaſily get out the *whole Chain.* The Promiſes are like to a golden Chain with divers links, lay hold upon one aright, and this will aſſure thee of thy intereſt in all the reſt.

I have known many, yea, very many, who have died with a great deal of comfort from the Applica-

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tion of that one Text, 1 *John* 3. 14. unto their own condition, *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the Brethren.* When all other evidences failed them, and all other Texts of Scripture afforded them no comfort, here they anchored, here they found reſt for their ſouls; They bleſſed God that they could ſay, that they *loved the Brethren*, and loved them *not for any outward reſpects*, but becauſe of the *Image of God in them*, and they loved them when poor, as well as when rich; and the more they had of God, the more they loved them; and they loved them even when they were reproved by them of their faults. And upon this one Plank they ſwam ſafely and comfortably unto the *Haven of eternal Happineſs.*

Rule 10.

If thy *condition* be ſo ſad, and thy *melancholy* ſo *exceſſive*, that thou canſt not lay hold upon any promiſe, yet notwithſtanding look towards it; Say as *Jonah* when he was in the Whales belly, *Jonah* 2. 4. *Then I ſaid I am caſt out of thy ſight,* The tenth Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

ſight, yet I will look again towards thy holy Temple. The Temple was a type of Chriſt Though thou canſt not apply Chriſt to thy ſoul for thy comfort, yet look towards him; and if thou canſt not come to him, he will come to thee: if thou canſt not apprehend him, he will apprehend thee; As the *Load-ſtone* will draw the *Iron*, though the Iron cannot draw the *Loadſtone*; ſo will Chriſt (thy heavenly *Loadſtone*) draw thee to the *Promiſes*, though thou canſt not draw thy ſelf to it. *No man can come to me* (ſaith Chriſt) *except the Father draw him*: Pray therefore with the *Church*, Cant. 1:4. *Draw me, and we will run after thee.*

Pſa. 3. 12

[Joh. 6. 44.]

Rule 11.

The eleventh Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

Pray unto God to give thee *Spiritual eyes* to behold thy *intereſt* in the *Promiſes*? For as it is God who makes them, ſo it is only he who can *irradiate* them, and open thy eyes to ſee thy right in them. It is with Promiſes (as I have ſaid) as with Chapters and Sermons. A man may read a Chapter, and hear a Sermon, and taſte no ſweetneſs in them,

them at one time, and at another time taſte much ſweetneſs in them, as God is pleaſed to co-operate with the Reading of the one, and Hearing of the other. So it is with the Promiſes, and therefore pray unto God *to lighten thine eyes, that thou ſleep not the ſleep of death.* Pray unto Chriſt *to anoint thine eyes with his Spiritual eye-ſalve.* And to cauſe thee to hope in his word of Promiſe; according to that Excellent prayer of *David, Remember the Word unto thy Seevant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* It is God muſt cauſe us to hope and truſt in his promiſes, or elſe we ſhall never be able. God hath given thee eyes to ſee thy miſery; O pray for eyes to ſee his mercy. The Church of *Laodicea* wanted eyes to ſee her miſery; *She was miſerable, and naked, and knew it not.* Thou haſt eyes to ſee thy undone condition out of Chriſt; pray for eyes to behold the riches of mercy that are in Chriſt, and his willingneſs to receive all that come in him.

Pſal. 13,3

Rev. 3.18

Pſal. 49

Rev. 3.16

The 12t Rule for the right Application of the Promiſes.

Rule 12.

Pray unto God, not only to give thee Faith for

thee *Spiritual eyes*, to see thy interest in the Promises, but a *Spiritual hand*, to enable thee to apply them to thine own soul in particular. By this Spiritual Hand, I mean, *A Christ appropriating Faith*. Justifying Faith is as it were) the *hand of the soul*, by which we *appropriate Christ*, and all the Promises, as belonging to us in particular. Now *Faith is the Gift of God*. Pray for *the Spirit of Faith*. And for your encouragement, consider, that the Spirit is called, *The promise of the Father, and that holy Spirit of promise*: And God hath promised to give the spirit to those who ask for it; *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* The office of the holy Spirit is first to *seal grace*, and then to *seal to grace*: First, the Spirit *sanctifieth* us; then it *witnesseth* to our *spirits*, that we are *sanctified*. Pray therefore unto God that he would not only work grace in you, but *witness unto the Grace* which he hath wrought. Pray for the *sanctifying* and *sealing* work of the Spirit.

Ephes. 2. 8.

Acts 1. 4.
Eph. 1. 13,

Luk 11. 13

Eph. 1. 14.

That

That he would not only fit you to have an *intereſt* in the Promiſes, but aſſure you of your *intereſt in them.*

Rule 13.

The 13. Rule for the Right Application of the Promiſes

Study thy intereſt in the Promiſes in the time of *health*, and *outward proſperity*; For I find by experience, that a child of God (*under outward affliction*, or *divine deſertion*, or *extream melancholy*) is many times like a man in the dark. A man in the dark cannot (though never ſo learned) read in a book of the cleareſt Print, or faireſt characters; he cannot (though never ſo active) undertake any thing of weight. No more can a child of God in the *hour of diſtreſs*, read his Evidences for Heaven, much leſs ſtudy to find out Evidences; he looks upon all the Promiſes *with a black pair of ſpectacles*, and wants light to ſee his intereſt in them. When *Zion* was in diſtreſs, ſhe ſaid, *God had forſaken her, and her Lord had forgotten her.* Iſa. 49. 14. When *David* was perſecuted by *Saul*, he ſaid in his haſte, *All men are Lyers*, even *Samuel* himſelf, who had told him Pſ. 116. 11

that God would bestow the Kingdome on him; He said *in his haste he was cut off from before Gods eyes.* Thus did *Haman.* Christ himself cried out, when he was upon the Cross, with a loud voice, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* As men in Agues and Feavers, are not fit judges of meats and drinks (whether they be good or bad) because their pallats are out of taste. So a *distressed Christian* (when under *extream melancholly, divine desertion,* or some *great affliction*) is no fit Judge, at such a time of his interest in the promises. And therefore my advice is, *Make out thy interest in time of prosperity, and live upon it in time of adversity. Make, and read over thy Evidences for heaven in time of Health, and learn them by heart; that when thou comest into a dark condition; thou mayest neither have them to make, or to read.* Do as *Tamar* did, *Gen.* 98. 18, 25. When *Judah* her Father in law, lay with her; she took as a pledge his *signet, bracelets* and *staff.* And afterward when shee was in great distress, and ready to be burnt as a Harlot; she then brought her

Ps. 31. 22. Ps. 88. 13. & 4, 15, 16, 17, 18.

staff

ſtaffe and *ſignet*, and *bracelets*, and ſaid: *By the man whoſe theſe are, am I with Child*; and thereby ſhe ſaved her life. So muſt you do. In time of health, ſtudy thy Intereſt in the Promiſes, and in time of ſickneſs, live upon what thou haſt ſtudied, then bring forth thy *ſtaffe* and *bracelets*, &c. Then produce thy Evidences, and make uſe of them, as ſpiritual Buttereſſes to keep thee from falling into deſpair.

I knew a very Godly woman (not unknown to many here) who in her life time had taken a great deal of pains to compoſe, and write down her *Evidences* for Heaven, and who alſo kept a *Diary* of her life, and wrote down how ſhee ſpent every day; when ſhe lay upon her death bed, it pleaſed God to with-draw himſelf from her, for a while, and to let the Devil looſe, who tempted her to deſpair, told her ſhe was an *Hypocrite*, a *Formaliſt*, and that ſhe had no true grace in her. She ſent for me, made her bitter complaint to me, and ſadly bewailed her condition: Then ſhe told me (which before I knew

Mrs. Diggonsdwelling with Mrs. Moor in Alderſmanbury.

not) how she had spent her life, how careful she had been in *searching her ways*, in observing how she spent every day, and how exact in collecting *Evidences for Heaven*: the Book was sent for, I read a great part of it to her, and took much delight and content in what I read. And it pleased God to come to her with comfort in the reading of it. She shewed her *Staff*, and her *Bracelets*, and thereby quenched the fiery darts of the Devil.

Thus I have in three Sermons taught you how to make use of *Scripture-promises*, as *Conduits* of *Soul-supportation*, and *Soul-consolation* in the day of distress. When you hereafter read the *Bible*, remember the promising-word (as well as the Commanding and Threatning word) make a *Catalogue* of the Promises, meditate upon the *preciousness*, *freeness*, *usefulness*, *largeness*, *richness*, and *immutability* of them. They are as certain as God himself; they have the strength of God, the comforts of God, and assistance of God in them above all, labour to make Applica-

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tion of them to your own Soul For this purpose, study these thirteen Rules and Directions. Pray unto God to give thee *spiritual Eyes*, to see thy Interest in them, and *spiritual Hands* to reach out after them. Pray to God to give thee *spiritual ability*, to act faith upon the Promises, to draw vertue from them, as the Woman who had the bloody Issue did from Christ; to suck out all the sweetness that is in them, to hang upon them, as the Woman did upon the Prophet, and as the Bee doth upon a flower, and by application of them to thy soul, to live in God, and on God here, till thou comest to enjoy the blessings promised with God for ever in Heaven.

There is one Objection behind, which when I have answered, I have done. For a distressed Christian will object, and say:

Object. *Though the Promises are* rare Cordials, *and shall all of them be certainly fulfilled, yet God is oftentimes long before he fulfills them, and while God is fulfilling of his Promises, I may in the mean time perish in my afflictions.*

Gen. 3. 15. Luk. 18. 7, 8. *Answ.* I cannot be denied, but that God is oftentimes very long in fulfilling his Promises. He Promised that the *seed of the Woman should bruse the Serpents head*; but it was four thousand years before that Promise was actually accomplished. He promiseth to *avenge his Elect of all their Enemies, to do it speedily.* and the souls under the Alter cry, Rev. 6. 10. *How long Lord, when wilt thou avenge our Blood?* &c. But this is not yet fulfilled.

Nay, I must add, that God is not onely a long time *performing* his Promises, but sometimes instead of performing them, he seems to the eye of flesh and blood to walk contrary to them. *Sometimes the Providences of God run cross to his Promises.* God promised to make *David* King; instead of this, he is persecuted by *Saul*, as a *Partridge upon the Mountains*, he is driven to that extremity that he begins to doubt of Gods Promise, and to say, *That one day he should dye by the hand of Saul.* God promised to *Joseph, that the Sun, Moon, and Stars* 1 Sa. 27. 1. *should worship him*, and that this, should

ſhould be lifted up above the ſheaf of his Brethren. But he findes the quite contrary, his Brethren ſeek to *ſlay him*, ſell him into *Ægypt*, and there he is put in Priſon as one quite forſaken of God. But yet notwithſtanding all this, you muſt know, That though the way of God, in performing his promiſes, be very myſterious and ſecret, yet he will at laſt perform every and tittle of them. Thus *David* was at laſt made King of *Iſrael*, and *Joſeph* Lord of *Ægypt*, and his Brethren came all to worſhip him.

Queſt. *How muſt we carry and behave our ſelves at ſuch times, when providences ſeem to run croſs unto Gods Promiſes?*

Anſw. At ſuch times there are three things required of us.

1 It is our duty to wait *patiently* and *believingly*, till *Providences* and *Promiſes* meet together. *He that believeth, maketh not haſte.* The Prophet there ſpeaks of a glorious promiſe, and adds, That a true Saint will wait Gods time, which is the fitteſt and beſt time, he will

Three duties to be practiſed when Providences run croſs to Promiſes.

patiently expect till God fulfil his Promise; He will do as the Martyr did, who might have escaped privately out of prison, and was tempted to it by his Friends, but answered, *He would not go out of Prison when his enemies would have him, for they would make him tarry longer then he should, nor yet when his friends would have him, for they would make him tarry a lesser time then he should; but he would come out when God would have him.* Gods time is the best, and they are soon enough delivered, who are delivered in Gods way, and at Gods time. This then is thy great duty (O Christian) to wait patiently, and believingly, and not to seek by unlawful ways to be rid of thy miseries, as *David* did by going to the *Philistims*; and as many in Queen *Maries* days did, by yielding to the Popish superstitions. To help you to wait Gods leisure, holding Faith and a good Conscience; you have

1 Sam. 27. 1

1. Many rare and precious Promises made to those that wait upon him; which I have formerly named.

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2. You have four Attributes in God to ſupport you, his *Faithfulneſs*, *Almightineſs*, *infinite Goodneſs* and *Wiſdom*. He is *Faithful*, and not one tittle of his Word ſhall fall to the ground: He is *Almighty*, and able to do whatſoever he hath promiſed; He is *infinitely Wiſe*, to know the beſt time and ſeaſon, and *infinitely Good* and *Loving* to his Children, and doth not willingly afflict them, but will make haſte to help them. Lam. 3. 33.

2. It is our duty to live upon *promiſes*, while *Providences* ſeem to run croſs to *promiſes*. This is the meaning of *Hab.* 2. 4. *The juſt ſhall live by Faith*. They ſhall *live by Faith*. when they have nothing elſe to live on, when ſenſe and reaſon tell them, they are undone, then ſhall they *live by Faith* in the promiſes, and not only live patiently, but comfortably, and joyfully; as the ſame Prophet ſaith, *Hab* 3. 17, 18, 19. *Although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſome, neither ſhall fruit be in the Vine, and the field ſhall yield no meat, &c. Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.*

This

Acts 27. 20,23,24. This life did *Paul* live, when the Ship in which he was, was ready to be drowned, when there was neither Sun-light, nor Star-light, yet he was exceedingly chearful, because God had promised to preserve him, and those with him. By living this life, *God is much honoured*, and our souls much quieted and refreshed.

3 It is our duty to *continue praying till Providences and Promises meet together*: For it is prayer, and prayer only, which will at last reconcile Gods Promises, and Gods Dispensations, and cause them to meet and to kiss one another: For as the Promises are the ground and rule of our prayers; so our prayers are the divine ways and means for the obtaining of the promises. I say as the promises are;

1 The ground of our prayers. For we cannot pray in Faith, unless we have some promise to bottome our prayers upon; therefore *David* often chargeth God in his prayers with his promise. He harps eight times upon the same stirring in one Psalm, to teach us, that the grea-

Psal. 119. 28,38,41. 65,76. 107,142. 149.

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teſt *Rhetorick and Oratory we can uſe in our Prayers, is to urge God with his Promiſe.*

2. They are not only the ground, but the Rule of our Prayers: As we muſt pray for nothing but what God hath promiſed, ſo we muſt regulate our prayers according to Gods Promiſes. Thoſe things which he hath abſolutely promiſed, we muſt pray for abſolutely; and where God hath put Conditions and Exceptions, there our Prayers muſt be Conditional.

Now as the Promiſes are the ground and rule of our Prayers, ſo our Prayers are divine means and helps for the obtaining of the Promiſes: Though God hath made many glorious and precious Promiſes to his Children, yet he will perform none of them, but to thoſe who by Prayer ſeek them at his hands. When *Nathan* told *David* what great things God had promiſed to him, he went into Gods Houſe to pray for them, 2 *Sam.* 7. The Prophet *Iſaiah* mentioneth a glorious promiſe, *Iſa.* 43. 25. but he adds, *Put me in remembrance,*

verſe

verſe 20. Thus *Ezek.* 36. 37. *I will yet for this be inquired of by the houſe of Iſrael*; and therefore when you read the promiſes of the Bible, remember whatſoever God makes a promiſe, you muſt make a prayer, and that prayer will haſten the fulfilling of the promiſes: You muſt continue to pray, and faint not: For the *viſion is but for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*. This did *Daniel*, when he underſtood the time approached, *&c.* He prayed, *Dan.* 9. 2, 3. Thus did *David*, Pſal. 56. 9. 10, 57. 1, 2. Thus muſt you do. Theſe are the three great duties which the Lord requires of us at all times, but more eſpecially in theſe our days, wherein the *providences* of God ſeem to run quite croſs unto his *promiſes*. The Lord give us grace to practiſe them. So much for this Text.

The End of the fifth Sermon.

A Brief Repetition of what was ſaid of Mrs. Elizabeth Moore *at her Burial.*

THough I have Finiſhed my Text, yet I have another Text remaining, of which I muſt ſpeak a few words, and that is, The party deceaſed, at whoſe Funeral we are here met.

She was a Woman (I verily believe) truly *fearing God*, and yet throughout her whole life loaded with many and great troubles. God picked her out to be a *pattern* of afflictions, as he had not long before, that Reverend and godly Miniſter, Mr. *Jeremiah Whitakers*.

This *Pattern* teacheth us three Leſſons.

1. *That all things come alike to all in this World, and that no man knoweth love or hatred by any thing that is before him.* The beſt of Saints ſometimes are upon the Dunghill, when the

the vileſt of men are upon the Throne. The beſt of men are afflicted, when the worſt of men are in proſperity.

2. That there is not ſo much *evil* in *Affliction*, or ſo much *good* in *Proſperity*, as the *World imagineth*; For if there were, God would not beſtow ſo much Proſperity upon the wicked, and exerciſe his dear Children with ſo many Afflictions.

3. That there will come a rewarding-day, in which it ſhall certainly be well with the *Righteous*. When I ſee a wicked man proſper, I ſay, Surely there will come a *puniſhing day*, in which the wicked ſhall be turned into Hell. When I ſee a Godly man in adverſity, I ſay, Pſal. 58. *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.* Such examples prove that there is another life, beſides this. And that if the *Godly had hope only in this life, they were of all men moſt miſerable.*

I will not trouble you with a relation of her Chriſtian carriage [illegible] time of her ſickneſs, [illegible]

is ſufficiently known to moſt here preſent. I ſhall only take notice of her great care and diligence in making her *Calling* and *Election ſure*. She had not her Ark to build when the Flood came, nor her Corn to get when the ſeven years of Famine came; She had laid up a ſtock of graces and comforts againſt the evil hour; She had not her *Evidences for Heaven* to get, at the hour of death. But ſhe had collected and compoſed them in the time of her life; and when ſhe came to die, ſhe had neither her *Graces*, nor her *Comforts*, nor her *Evidences for Heaven* to ſeek, ſhe had nothing to do but to die.

Her ſickneſs was very long, and very painful; concerning which I ſhall briefly acquaint you with theſe few particulars.

1. God moved the hearts of very many godly people, to take compaſſion of her ſad and afflicted condition, and to contribute liberally (though poor) towards her relief, this merciful Providence wonderfully comforted her: She ſaw Gods hand in it, and was ſo much affe-

the vileſt of men are upon the Throne. The beſt of men are afflicted, when the worſt of men are in proſperity.

2. That there is not ſo much *evil* in *Affliction*, or ſo much *good* in *Proſperity*, as the *World imagineth*; For if there were, God would not beſtow ſo much Proſperity upon the wicked, and exerciſe his dear Children with ſo many Afflictions.

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I will not trouble you with a relation of her Chriſtian carriage, in the time of her health, becauſe it

is ſufficiently known to moſt here preſent. I ſhall only take notice of her great care and diligence in making her *Calling* and *Election ſure*. She had not her Ark to build when the Flood came, nor her Corn to get when the ſeven years of Famine came; She had laid up a ſtock of graces and comforts againſt the evilſt hour; She had not her *Evidences for Heaven* to get, at the hour of death. But ſhe had collected and compoſed them in the time of her life; and when ſhe came to die, ſhe had neither her *Graces*, nor her *Comforts*, nor her *Evidences for Heaven* to ſeek, ſhe had nothing to do but to die.

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fted with it, that ſhe was (for a little while) really and exceedingly afraid) notwithſtanding her great torments by reaſon of a Cancer in her breaſt) leſt ſhe ſhould have her Heaven in this life, and leſt this mercy ſhould be all her portion. The Lord recompence that labour of love, and that Chriſtian charity a thouſand fold into the boſomes of thoſe who manifeſted ſo much kindneſs to her.

2. Her patience was very great: As God increaſed her pains, he increaſed her patience, even to the admiration of ſuch of us as were frequent ſpectators of it. She was brought to ſuch a ſweet frame of ſpirit, as to be *willing to live under all her torments, as long as God pleaſed, and to die whenſoever he pleaſed.*

3. She was a Woman of a very fearful nature, and in the time of her health had many doubts and ſcruples (notwithſtanding all her care formentioned) about her ſalvation. But in her ſickneſs, all her doubts vaniſhed. God chained up Satan. The Devil had no power to

tempt her, ſhe felt a great calmneſs to her ſoul, and had much inward peace; and enjoyed more of God, and his conſolations, in the time of her ſickneſs, than in the time of her health.

4. She was very forward in ſpreading and diffuſing thoſe graces which God had beſtowed upon her, and in giving good counſel to thoſe who viſited her. I have heard her often, and often, perſwading her friends to prize health, and to improve it for the good of their ſouls, to lay up againſt an evil day, and to ſtock themſelves with grace before ſickneſs come. She would frequently ſay, *O the benefit of health? O prize health, praiſe God for health, and improve health for your eternal good.*

5. She was very well vers'd in the Scriptures. The Law of God was her *delight, and this kept her from periſhing in her affliction.* She was continually fetching Cordials out of the Word, to comfort her under her great pains, and to preſerve her from fainting. The 12*th* of the *Hebrews* was a precious Cordial

unto

unto her, ſo was the 8th. of the *Romans*, and the 2d of the *Corinthians*, the 4. chapter, and the 17. 18. verſes. *For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen are temporal; but the things that are not ſeen, are eternal.*

1 Cor. 15. 53, 54, 55, 56, 57. *For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption; and this mortal, muſt put on immortality. So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality; then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory. O death where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the Law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Phil. 3. 21. *Who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like*

unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

A little before her death ſhe ſaid, *In the Lord Jehovah there is righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, righteouſneſs for *juſtification*, and ſtrength for *ſupportation*. She ſaid, that the *Word of God was the beſt Cordial in the world*: And that one minutes being in Heaven, would make amends for *all her pain and miſery*.

6. And laſtly, I cannot but take ſpecial notice of the happy cloſe of her life, and of the bleſſed end ſhe made. It is ſaid of *Job*, James 5. 11. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord*, &c. This our Chriſtian Siſter did in a great meaſure partake both of *Jobs pains* and *Jobs patience*; and made as happy an end as he did, though in another kind. In the morning of that day in which ſhe died, ſhe fell into a ſlumber, in which ſhe heard (as ſhe thought) one ſaying to her, *This day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe*. Immediately ſhe awaked full of joy, and though hardly able to ſpeak, yet

ſhe

ſhe uttered it to thoſe who ſtood by, and was much comforted with it. Now though I am far from putting any confidence in *dreams*, and doubt not *that a man may dream he ſhall go to Heaven, and yet be caſt into Hell.* Though I do not think *that comfortable dreams are ſufficient evidences of ſalvation* (nay, when they are brought as proofs of *erroneous opinions*, I account them *Diabolical deluſions*; and when wicked men have them, *pleaſant Preſumptions.*) Yet notwithſtanding when a Woman who hath ſpent many years in the ſervice of God, and is viſited by God for above a year, with great and moſt grievous pains, ſhall at the cloſe of her life (when ſhe is upon the very brink of Eternity) have ſuch a *ſweet, refreſhing, and heart-chearing impreſſion upon her ſpirit*; when heart fails, and fleſh fails: when ſhe can hardly ſpeak to expreſs the greatneſs of her joy, then to hear a voice (as it were) ſaying to her, *This day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* This (in all probability) was *the voice of God, and not of man. This was the Lords doing, & it is marvellous*

in

in our eyes. I forbear ſaying any more. She is gone from a Priſon to a Palace; from a Purgatory to a Paradice. She is at *reſt with God, where all tears are wiped away from her eyes.* The Lord fit us by his Grace to follow her in due time into the Kingdom of Glory, *Amen.*

Mrs. *Elizabeth Moores* EVIDENCES for HEAVEN.

Collected by her ſelf in the time of her health, in ſuch manner and method, as they are here preſented to Publick view.

1. Her *Deſign* in this *Collection.*

IN the Examination of my ſelf, I find that my Aims and Ends, why I deſire to gather together and clear up my *Evidences* for Heaven (if my deceitful heart doth not deceive me) are theſe following:

1. That

The first Design.

1. That hereby (as a means) I may be enabled to glorifie God in *the great work of believing*, that hereby (with Gods blessing) the dim eye of my Faith may more clearly see the Lord Jesus Christ to be a *Peacemaker*, and *Reconciler*, and *Surety*, for *me*, even for *me*, who am by Nature a Fire-brand of Hell. The time was, I am sure, when I was the *Devils* Picture, and had the *black brand of Reprobation* upon me, and therefore it doth nearly concern me to search and try what *Evidences* I have to prove that God (fetching Arguments out of his own bowels, and the riches of his free grace) hath redeemed me out of this lost estate.

The second Design.

2. My *Aim* is to strengthen that longed for grace of *Assurance*. A grace, which though it be not of absolute necessity for the *being* and *salvation*, yet is of absolute necessity for the *well being* and *consolation* of a Christian; without this grace I can neither live nor die comfortably; and I have been often exhorted by Gods faithful *Ambassadors*, to gather together my Scripture-E-

vidences, and to have the approbation of some Godly and Experienced Minister or Christian; and this by Gods blessing may be a means to strengthen Assurance: Yea, I find in Scripture, that the Lord saith, Mat. 3. 7. that *the Priests lips shall preserve knowledg, and thou shalt seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

3. My *Aim* is to obey God in his Word, who hath commanded me by his Apostle, *To work out my own salvation with fear and trembling; and to give all diligence to make my calling and election sure:* And I am exhorted *to examine my self, and prove my self, whether I be in the faith or no: Know ye not* (saith the Apostle) *that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates: And if any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new.* The third Design. Phil. 2. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 10. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

Now then to prove whether I be indeed and in truth born again, is my desire at this time, the Lord help me, and give me a sincere and upright heart, and guide me herein by his holy Spirit, for the ho-

nour of his holy Name.

2. A brief *Collection* of her *Evidences for Heaven.*

Blessed be God, who hath through his free mercy *begotten me to a hope*, that I am *regenerated and born from above, and converted unto God.*

First Evidence

Reason, Because the Lord hath gone the same usual way with me, as with those he pleaseth to convert to himself; and this I shall make to appear in five, or six Particulars.

1 The Lord by his Spirit accompanying the Preaching of his Word, caused the scales to fall from my eyes, and opened them, and set up a clear light in my understanding, and made me to see *sin to be exceeding sinful*, out of measure sinful, and to look on it as the loathsomest thing in the world, and on my self as a lothsome creature in Gods sight, and in my own sight, by reason of the Leprosie of sin, wherewith I was over-run.

2 The Lord brought me to see the *misery* that I was in, by reason of my sins. I thought that I was utterly forsaken of God, and I thought that

that God would never accept of ſuch a wretch as I ſaw my ſelf to be. I could not think otherwiſe, but that Hell was my portion, and that I, by reaſon of my ſins, muſt go thither; expecting every day when the Lord would glorifie himſelf in my damnation. I ſaw my ſelf in more miſery, becauſe of my ſins, than I could then, or now expreſs to any body. I looked upon God as a *conſuming Fire*, and on my ſelf as *ſtubble*, ready to be conſumed by him, *&c.*

3. The Lord brought me to a ſpiritual aſtoniſhment, that I cried out, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* And ſaid with *Paul*, *Lord! What wouldſt thou have me to do?* Do but make known to thy poor creature what thy Will is, and I thought I could do any thing, or ſuffer any thing for the Lord. But ſince I have had ſome more knowledge of the holy Will of God, woe is me! What a barren and unfruitful heart have I! A heart that can neither do nor ſuffer any thing for the Lord as I ought to do. But this I can ſay, that the aſtoniſhment I was in by

the ſight of my ſins, and the miſery I was plunged into, put me on the *performance of holy duties*, eſpecially *prayer*.

4. The Lord took me off my own *bottom*, off my own righteouſneſs, and made me to ſee that, that was but a *ſandy Foundation*, and would not hold out. I was not taken off from the performance of holy duties; no, I thought with my ſelf that I am commanded by God, to perform holy duties, which is the way and means whereby we may meet with God, (For he is ordinarily to be enjoyed no where but in his own Ordinances). But the Lord took me off from reſting and truſting in Ordinances. And as he made me to ſee, that without the practiſe of them he would not accept of me; ſo alſo he made me to know, that it was not for holy duties, for which I was accepted. The ſins that cleave to my beſt performances, are enough, for which the Lord may juſtly condemn me, if I had no other ſins.

5. The Lord brought me to ſee a *Superlative beauty and excellency in* the

the Lord Jesus Christ, and my soul was deeply in love with him, even with whole Christ in all his offices, and (if I know any thing at all of my own heart) I desired Christ as much to be my King and Prophet, to teach and guide me, and subdue me to himself, and rule over me, as to be my *High Priest*, to make Atonement by offering up of himself for me, and washing me in his blood, by which I must be justified.

6. The Lord brought me to see a *soul-satisfaction* in the Lord Jesus Christ alone; and I think I should be as fully satisfied with Christ alone, as my heart can desire. If I know my heart, it panteth after Christ, and Christ alone: *None but Christ, none but Christ.* The whole world in comparison or competition with Christ, is nothing to me: but in him I see full contentment. To see and know my interest in him, and to enjoy communion with him, is that, which if the Lord would bestow upon me, I should with *Jacob* say, *it is enough*; and with old *Simeon*, *Now let thy*

servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation.

Now I desire to set down some other Scripture-Evidences, that I find upon search and examination of my heart, by laying it to the Rule, the Word of God.

Second Evidence. My second Scripture-Evidence is taken from *Mark* 2. 17. Where Christ saith, *They that are whole, have no need of the Physitian, but they that are sick*; and *he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Now through Gods mercy *I* can say that I am a *sin-sick-sinner* (the Lord make me more sick) *I* am not righteous in mine own eyes) but a sinner, and see my self undone for ever, without the righteousness of Christ be imputed to me; and therefore *I* hope *I* am among the number of those whom Christ was commissionated by his father to come to save.

Third Evidence. From *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. *I* am *weary and heavy laden*; now Christ hath promised to *give ease* to such. And *I* am willing to *take his yoke upon me*, and would fain learn of him the lesson of meekness and low-

lowlineſs, and therefore am invited to *come unto him*.

I can ſay with *David*, that my ſins are a *heavy burden* to me, they are too *heavy for me*. Pſal. 38. 4. And I can ſay, that I mourn, becauſe I can mourn no more for my ſins; now Chriſt ſaith, *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*, Mat. 5. 4. Fourth Evidence.

From *Mat.* 5. 3. I think (if my heart do not deceive me) I am *poor in ſpirit*; *now theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, ſaith Chriſt. Fifth Evidence.

From *Mat.* 12. 20. I am a *bruiſed reed, and ſmoking flax*; and therefore Chriſt hath promiſed, he will not break ſuch a reed, nor quench the ſmoak of grace, if it be true grace, but he will increaſe it more and more (as he ſaith) *until judgment break forth into victory*. And he came to ſet at *liberty* them that are *bruiſed*, Luke 4. 18. Therefore I hope *I* am ſuch a one as he came to *bind up* and ſet at *liberty*; Yea, and that he was *annointed* and ſent by his Father to me, and ſuch as *I* am *Iſa.* 61. 1. Sixth Evidence.

From 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faith-* Seventh Evidence

ful saying, and worthy of all acceptation (saith *Paul*) *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*: And so say I too; it is worthy all acceptation, that Christ should come from the bosom of his Father, who was infinitely glorious and happy, that he should come into the world to save *me, me a sinner, me the chief of sinners*; me, that if saved, I do verily believe, there is none in Heaven, nor any that ever shall come thither, that hath or will have the cause to *magnifie and adore free grace*, as I shall have. And herein doth God commend his love towards me. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life*, Rom. 5. 10.

Eighth Evidence

I can say with *Paul*, that I *delight in the Law of God, after the inward man*, and I am grieved that I cannot keep it. I find that spiritual war in me, between *flesh* and *spirit*, which *Paul* complaineth of, and I can say, that *Paul* doth confess over my heart in his confessions, *Rom.* 7. And I can go along with him there, from verse 9. to the

end of the chapter; and from hence I gather, that there is some spiritual life in my soul, and an endeavour to walk after the spirit, and therefore I hope and desire to conclude with him, that there shall be *no Condemnation to me*, but that the *Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make me free from the Law of sin and death.* I find an earnest desire wrought in my soul, to be made like unto Jesus Christ, and that it may be my *meat* and *drink* to do and suffer his will, as he would have me. Rom. 8. 1, 2.

I can say, that the Lord hath in some measure put his fear into my heart, that I fear to offend him, out of love to him, and I love to fear him. Ninth Evidence.

I can say with the Church to Christ. *Cant.* 1. 7. *O thou whom my soul loveth!* (and if I know any thing at all of my own heart) Christ is *altogether lovely*, and most desirable to my soul. Tenth Evidence.

I think I can truly say with *David*, *That I have none in Heaven but thee, and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides thee, in comparison of*

thee, in *competition* with thee. Though all that is deareſt to me in the world ſhould forſake me, yet if God whom *I* have choſen for my *Portion*, will not forſake me, *I* have enough. *It* is my deſire and endeavour more and more to *account all things but loſs and dung*, that I may win Chriſt. *I* can with *Peter* make my appeal to him, and ſay, Lord, thou who *knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee*, and that it is the deſire of my ſoul to love thee more, and to love thee for thy ſelf, becauſe thou art holy, and good, and gracious, and *the chiefeſt amongſt ten thouſand*; Yea, God in Chriſt alone, is worthy to be beloved, and it is my *higheſt priviledg* that he will give me leave to love him, who only can ſatisfie my ſoul, and *redeem* it from death eternal, who hath juſtified me by his blood, and ſanctified me by his Spirit; whom therefore *I* love *with all my heart, and all my ſoul, and all my might, and all my ſtrength*. Finding therefore, that God hath drawn out my heart to love him, and make choice of him alone; *I* from hence gather

and

and ground my hope, that God loveth me, according to that Scripture, 1 *John* 4. 14. *We love him, because he first loved us.*

I find my heart much inflamed with love to all the Children of God, *because they are Gods Children*; and the more *I* see, or find, or hear of God in them, the more *I* find my heart cleaving to them; and *I* think *I* can truly say with *David*, That *my delight is in the Saints, and those that excel in grace*; not because they are friends to me, or *I* have relation to them, in regard of outward obligations, but because they bear the image of God upon them, and manifest it in their Holy conversation: *I* love them, whether rich, or poor. And though I did never know some of them, but only hear of their holiness, and piety, yet *I* could not but exceedingly love such. Therefore *I* hope that *I am passed from death to life, because I love the Brethren*, 1 John 3. 14. Eleventh Evidence

I do not only love God, and the Children of God, but *I* labour to *keep his Commandments*, and they are not *grievous to me*. But *I* pray Twelfth Evidence

with

Psal 1 9. 5. 7. 32, 34 with *David*. O *that my wayes were directed to keep thy Statues! Lord inlarge my heart, and I will run the wayes of thy Commandments. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart; for therein do I delight.*

Thirteenth Evidence. I find I am one that is very thirsty after Jesus Christ, and the grace of Christ; and I thirst to have his image more and more stamped upon me; and I would fain be assured by Gods Spirit, that I am *transplanted into Christ*, and therefore I long, and endeavour after a true and *lively Faith*, because that Grace is a *soul-transplanting and uniting Grace*. Now Christ hath promised to satisfie the *thirsty*, Mat. 5. 6. and such Christ hath earnestly invited to come, though they have nothing to bring but what they make against themselves, yet to come *empty*, and he hath promised to *fill them*, Isa. 55. 1, 2.

Fourteenth Evidence. I am willing to *confess*, and with all my heart to forsake all my sins. I am willing to give glory to God, in taking shame unto my self. I acknow-

acknowledge my self a guilty Malefactor, and judge my self worthy of the just condemnation of the righteous Judg of all the Earth. And I do not only confess my sins, but with all my heart I desire to forsake them, and to turn to the Lord: Now he hath said, he *will have mercy* on such, and will *abundantly pardon them: For his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his wayes as our wayes*, Isa. 55. 7, 8. It is my constant endeavour, to die to sin, to live to newness of life. And this is my comfort and hope, that he who hath begun a good work in me, will perfect it. For it is he that *worketh all our works in us, and for us*, Isa. 26. 12. And he that hath wrought in me to *will* to do that which is pleasing in his sight, will work in me to *do* also, and that of his good pleasure, *Phil.* 2. 13.

Fifteenth Evidence.

I hope I am one whom God hath taken into Covenant with himself, because he hath bestowed upon me the fruits of the Covenant, because he hath *circumcised my heart* to love him, and hath put his *fear into me*, and hath wrought an universal change

change in me; and hath given me a *new heart*, and a *new ſpirit*; yea, his own ſpirit which he hath put within me, even the *Spirit of Truth, which will guide me into all Truth.* It is his own Promiſe to *give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it of him* (as *I* have done often, Luk. 11. 13. and *I* hope that God will make it in his due time, a *witneſſing*, and a *comforting Spirit.* *I* will wait upon him for the accompliſhment of all his Promiſes, both *of* Grace, and *to* Grace. He hath ſaid, he will be a *Sun* and a *Shield*, he will *give Grace and Glory*, *and no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly.* And he hath promiſed to ſubdue our ſins for us; and hath ſaid, *That ſin ſhall not have dominion over us*, Rom. 6. 14. *That he will be our God, and we ſhall be his Children; and he will ſave us from all our uncleanneſſes.* *I* hope *I* have a ſhare in this bleſſed Covenant of free Grace.

Seventh Evidence

As for my *Affliction* that lyeth upon me, (though it be in it ſelf very heavy) *I* much more deſire the *ſanctification* of it, than the *removal*

I earneſtly labour to learn all thoſe leſſons which God teacheth me by *Affliction.* I know I ſhould not be ſcourged, nor be in tribulation, but that I have need of it; *it is for my profit, to make me partaker of his holineſs.* Afflictions are an Evidence of *Sonſhip*, Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8. God hath promiſed, *that all things ſhall work together for good to them that love and fear him.* And I have had much experience of his faithfulneſs, who hath not ſuffered me to be tempted above what he hath enabled me to bear; *therefore I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.* He hath chaſtiſed me leſs then mine iniquities deſerve. He chaſtiſeth me here, that he may not condemn me hereafter.

Faith is the Condition of Salvation: *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and thou ſhalt be ſaved. And this is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe in his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* Now I find nothing ſo hard to me as to believe aright; to caſt away all my own righteouſneſs as dung, in point of Juſtification; and to caſt away

Seventeenth Evidence. Act. 16. 31. 1 Jo. 3. 23

all

all my *unrighteousness*, so as that be no bar to me, and to role, and cast, and venture my immortal soul upon Jesus Christ and his Righteousness, for life and salvation by him alone, and to see my self compleat in him; this is supernatural. Yet I must and will give glory to God, and say, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief*. And by this I prove, that this precious Grace of Faith is wrought in me because Jesus Christ is to me very precious: and I find in the Word, that *to them that believe he is precious*: and I am willing to take Christ upon his own terms, as he is tendred in the Gospel; and am willing to give up my self, soul and body, wholly to him; and my love to God, and to the Children of God, is a fruit of my Faith, as also my desire to be made like unto him: *For he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure*, 1 John. 3. 3. *And I trust that I am kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able and willing to keep that which I have*

1 Pet. 2. 7.

commited unto him, which is my immortal soul.

Thus I have, according to the Apostles exhortation, endeavoured to give a *reason of the hope that is in me*. What have I, but what I have received? The desire of my soul is, that God may have all the Glory: And if I be deceived, the Lord for Christs sake undeceive me, and grant that if I have not true Grace, I may not think I have, and so be in a *Fools Paradise*. And the Lord that is my *Heart-maker*, be my *Heart-searcher*, and my *Heart-discoverer*, and my *Heart-reformer*, AMEN.

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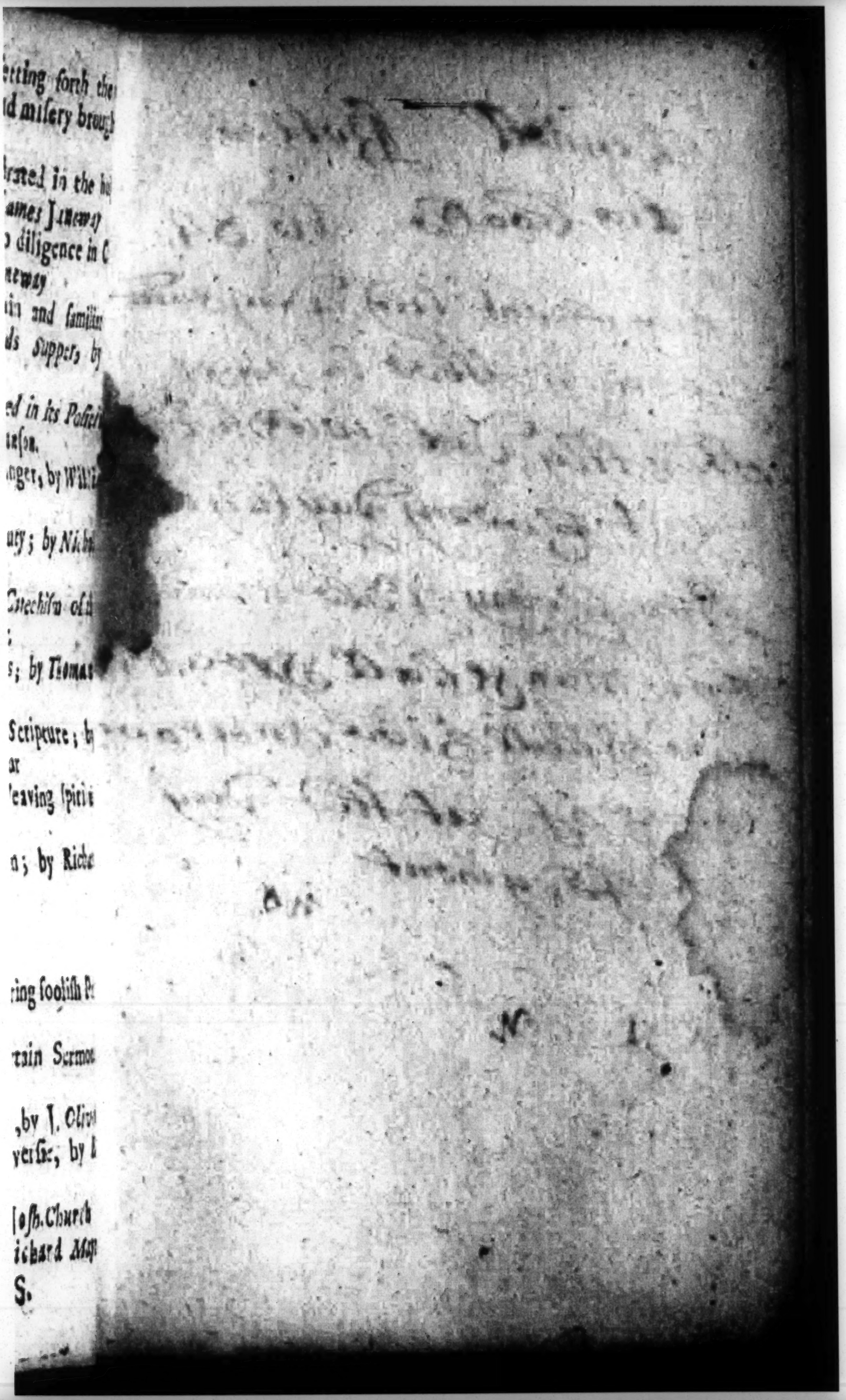
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